MISSIONARY STUDY PRINCIPLES

A MANUAL ON MISSIONARY STUDY

BY THE REV.
G. T. MANLEY, M.A.

LONDON
CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY
SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.
1913

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PREFACE

The following pages are the direct outcome of experience. They represent lessons that have been learned during six years spent in organizing Missionary Study, and many of the ideas have been directly suggested in conference with other Study Circle leaders.

Like many who have engaged in the study of the principles of education, and have attempted to apply them to spiritual work, the author has found that this study transforms the whole outlook upon life, regarded as an opportunity for influencing others. Both intellectually and spiritually it is a training for which we cannot be too thankful. It is a revelation of the natural and the spiritual powers which our God has entrusted to those who will seek them.

There is a happy community of ideas amongst all workers in the Missionary Study Movement that makes it unnecessary to inquire how far the principles here expounded are original and how far acquired from fellow-workers. The Author's thanks, however, are specially due to Miss R. E. Doggett, of Bournemouth, for much help in reading the proofs and for many valuable suggestions.

The attempt to relate the intellectual and spiritual side of teaching, and to discriminate between the work of education in the Church and in the school, is felt by the Author to be a venture into an untrodden region. It is his earnest desire that others may follow him with profounder thought, which may lead to the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the speedier extension of His Kingdom.

CONTENTS

MISSIONARY STUDY PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER I

THE MISSIONARY STUDY MOVEMENT AND ITS AIMS

Introduction.

All who have observed the rise and growth of the Missionary Study Movement are convinced that it is an instrument in God's hand. Within a few years it has sprung up in America, Great Britain, Holland, Denmark, Germany and other countries of the Continent, and in the British colonies and possessions.

In all these lands Study Circles have been formed, and special text-books published with helps and suggestions for leaders. Some of these text-books have reached a sale of over a hundred thousand copies, and have been translated into several languages within a year of their publication.

From individual study circles also remarkable results have followed. There are cases on record where persons quite indifferent to Missions have been induced to join, and, at the end of one or two courses of study, have offered and been accepted for work in the mission-field. Hundreds of informal prayer meetings—little recognized, but mighty forces for the evangelization of the world—have been the direct outcome of study; and thousands of pounds have been given or collected as a result of the enthusiasm generated.

The movement has equally proved a direct blessing to the home Church. From some Circles, many Sunday-school teachers have been provided; in others, members have been converted, or have come back to the Lord's Table after many

years of absence. A great amount of Bible study has been the direct result of missionary study. Some members have exercised the missionary spirit by seeking to win the souls around them, whilst others have sought and received a new infilling of the Holy Ghost.

The Leader's Questions.

The Study Circle leader whose success has been small hears of these results with wonder, and perhaps almost with despair. Satan at once suggests to him: 'You could never achieve such results, you have not the necessary gifts.' Satan was a liar from the beginning. The weakest leader, upon two conditions, can achieve marvellously great results—results which will astonish him and bring him to his knees in thankfulness and humble praise.

The first condition is *faith in God.* If he will pray, if he will believe, if he will trust God to work, if he will look up and press forward with patience and perseverance, this first condition is fulfilled.

The second condition is that he will *take pains to learn* how to lead. Leadership is an art, and 'art is long.' If the leader will practise and learn, if he will criticize himself and welcome criticism, if he will read and apply what he reads to his actual leading, if he will be content to progress slowly, but always to progress, he will have fulfilled the second condition.

Natural gifts are not to be despised, but in fact the greatest results have come from circles whose leaders were *not* marked by their natural gifts, but by their devotion.

The leader's question is: 'Howcan I make most use of the gifts I possess, and so learn to lead effectively?' It is the purpose of the present manual to help him to answer this question.

The Study Circle as an Instrument of Missionary Education.

A knowledge of the general outlines of the Study Circle method is here assumed.*

Its external features are: A small group of people reading

* For detailed information, see *Missionary Study Circles*, C.M.S. 1*d*.

a missionary text-book chapter by chapter, preparing certain topics, and meeting regularly to discuss them under the presidency of a leader.

In its essence the Study Circle may best be described as an attempt to apply the modern science of education to the missionary education of the Church. Underlying all education is the fundamental belief that a man's outward actions are the result of his inward motives and ideas. 'Out of the heart,' our Lord taught us, proceed the springs of action, both good and evil. If we would get rid of all the apathy and hostility to Missions, no superficial remedy will suffice, but we must deal with the very thoughts and hearts of men. Nothing less than the most systematic and persistent education of heart and mind will raise up a missionary Church.

The Missionary Study Movement, therefore, is by no means merely a new dodge or scheme. It aims at nothing less than bringing the whole Church to see the world as Christ sees it. It adopts the method of inducing people to read the fascinating annals of missionary work, and to discuss them upon the most educative method available. It relies upon the Spirit of God to use the means thus employed. It is, therefore, a combination of the intellectual with the spiritual.

It is related to the science of education, from which it derives its method; it is related to the accounts of missionary work, from which it derives its material for study; and it is related to the Spirit of God, from Whom alone it can derive its power. We shall briefly consider it in these three aspects.

The Science of Education.

A century ago education was entirely empirical, as medicine is in Central Africa to-day. Every man taught as seemed right in his own eyes. He bought all his own experience, dearly enough; but learned nothing from the experience of others. But since then a science of teaching has gradually been built up. Different teachers have compared their experiences, and theories have been tested by practice and experiment; some have been verified, and others rejected. So at last a great body of practical experience has been made available, and certain underlying principles have been clearly established.

It is now realized that the mind is subject to laws as well as the body, and that teachers, as much as doctors, need to be trained.

The effect of this change is most clearly seen in the improved teaching ability, not of great geniuses, but of the rank and file of the ordinary people, who now pass by thousands annually through the training colleges of our country. There they spend two years of their life studying the principles of education, and learning how to teach practically, by teaching classes under the expert guidance and criticism of their professors. The result is that persons with little natural ability become good average teachers, whilst those with brains reach a still higher standard. They learn to avoid many mistakes, and enter upon their work with a better understanding of its meaning and with a much greater enthusiasm for its purpose.

No less improvement is open to the Study Circle leader who will take pains to learn the science and the art of leading. By studying this manual and other books, and by practice, he can double his efficiency, if he will. Most of our readers will have qualifications which will richly repay cultivation, and the ability gained will find abundant uses in all directions.

The Material of Missionary Study.

The Church of Christ is not yet awake to the rich stores of inspiration which lie locked up in her missionary annals. They are indeed living bread, divinely intended for the Church's growth. The Acts of the Apostles derive their real inspiration from the fact that they record the acts of the Lord for thirty years from 'the day in which He was taken up' (Acts i. 2). There is a parallel inspiration ready for the Christian of to-day who will study the acts of the living Christ in his own generation. If Christ were dead this would not be so; but if He is alive, His deeds in the world have a vital place in the life of His disciples.

Who can limit the results that may follow from a study of the works of the Lord? An account given of the recent revival in Wales was the means of stirring up a great revival in Assam, followed by lasting and far-reaching religious and social results. Agnostics, untouched by argument, have been

converted by seeing the power of Christ in a foreign land; scores of missionaries have received their first inspiration from reading the life of some earlier missionary; many a call to sacrifice and service, like that of Keith Falconer, has come from 'a need made known, and the power to meet that need.'

Even Bible study needs supplementing by missionary study. If we confine ourselves to historical proof, there is danger lest we come to believe only in a Christ of long ago. If we concentrate too much upon our own minor experience, there is danger of religion becoming too subjective and regarded as a matter of personal opinion only. A study of missionary work, added to the others, produces a robust, objective faith in Christ, as living and working in the world to-day. It is especially a need of the times.

The Power of the Spirit.

Even the best educational method, and the most wonderful story of missionary work, will fail to produce really spiritual results without the operation of the Holy Spirit Himself. They may be sharp and effective instruments in His hands, but He alone can use them to eternal purpose.

Missionary work is so essentially spiritual in its character, that the prime object of the leader must be to make the Study Circle a sphere in which the Holy Spirit may work. There are many diversities of operations indeed, but, unless deep down the Spirit of God is working, the structure raised will be but wood, hay, and stubble, which will not stand the testing fire.

The Aims of Missionary Study.

The ultimate aim of the Missionary Study Movement is the evangelization of the world in this generation. This ultimate aim should be held steadily in view by every leader, and should dominate every thought and act.

The more immediate aim of the movement is by a process of missionary education to fit the Church for this task. For this there must be first and foremost, *a right attitude* of mind and heart towards Missions, and then there must be such teaching and training as will result in *right action*.

There are many ways in which these two sides, the ideal and the practical, of a missionary education might be further

analysed, but the following five headings will be found to cover most of the ground : (1) To form missionary convictions ; (2) to arouse missionary enthusiasm ; (3) to train in missionary service ; (4) to deepen the spiritual life ; (5) to secure immediate action.

The first three represent, from our point of view, the division of education under the threefold aspect of its intellectual, emotional, and practical aspects. The fourth is added because it introduces a factor peculiar to spiritual work. The fifth aim is due to the special and urgent character of the missionary enterprise. We deal not with children whose work lies in the future, but with adults who must be incited and prepared to work here and now, whilst it is yet called to-day.

The Threefold Nature of Education.

The whole life of man is comprised in what he knows, what he feels, and what he does ; and, accordingly, education may be regarded as a training of the mind to know, a training of the heart to feel, and a training of the will and practical activities to act. It is sometimes described as the three H's—the training of head, heart, and hand.

The three first aims, as we have stated them above, and to each of which a separate chapter will be devoted, correspond roughly to this division. If the world is to be evangelized in our generation, the Church must be trained to know Christ's view of the world, to feel His sympathy, His caring for it, and to equip itself to act so as to carry His command into effect.

This division into three is one of analysis only and not one of time. We cannot at one time aim only at producing convictions and at another of arousing enthusiasm, or training in service. One or other may be uppermost in our minds at any one time, but all three must be present, just as knowing, feeling, and acting are always constituents of human life. We shall consider them separately for clearness of thought, but in practice they continually interpenetrate and affect each other.

The Spiritual Life.

The deepening of the spiritual life also has its intellectual, emotional, and practical sides. The Study Circle, however, gives such an exceptional sphere for the operation of the Holy

Spirit in deepening the life of the members that this aspect of the aim of the work needs special emphasis.

The fellowship and mutual confidence generated in a Circle, as it meets week after week, create an atmosphere particularly helpful to spiritual influences. The discussion of missionary problems forms an easy avenue whereby reticent people may begin to talk upon the deeper questions, and to open up the deeper feelings of their own personal religion.

Over and over again missionary problems force upon mind and heart that our fundamental need is for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Unless His presence and life-giving power is specially sought, perhaps the greatest aim of the Study Circle will be missed.

Immediate Action.

Few, if any, groups of people can claim that they are already doing all that God would have them do for the bringing in of Christ's Kingdom. Therefore to bring them nearer this position must be a constant aim of all our missionary propaganda.

The Study Circle does not exist specially either to get prayer, or money, or offers of service, or to promote new efforts, or to improve our home organization. But it must aim generally at bringing its members to do their part in the work which has waited only too long.

The Leader's Aims.

The foregoing aims refer to the Missionary Study Movement as a whole. The aims of the individual leader are more restricted and definite. He has to consider not the whole enterprise, but the share in it which God would have this particular group to take.

Let him get upon his knees and ask God to reveal to him its utmost possibilities, either in deepened conviction, increased enthusiasm, more ability for service, stronger Christian life, or immediate action. Let him be sure that God sees in it great possibilities. Who but Jesus could have seen Apostles in the fishermen of Galilee, or have had such high aims and achieved such great results from a little circle of twelve? So, in Jesus' company let the leader learn to expect great things from God, and achieve great things for God.

CHAPTER II

THE MEMBER'S POINT OF VIEW

Introduction.

We have already concluded that the immediate aim of the Study Circle is so to influence the inner lives of the members that they shall know God's plan for the world, and be willing and able to take their places in that plan. The leader's work has to be done in the hearts and minds of the members.

Here we are met at the outset by a fundamental condition of all learning—namely, the separation and isolation of every individual mind.* It has been said that the individual consciousness is like a prison-cell in which its owner is condemned to lifelong solitary confinement ; from his own consciousness he can never escape, and into it no other person can ever enter. This somewhat sombre simile expresses a real truth which only needs to be stated to be realized.

It is this inner solitude which is the real field of operations of our Study Circle work.

The real results are not those registered by the leader upon his notes, but that which actually passes through the mind of each member. Has he added to his knowledge ? Has he been drawn nearer to Christ ? Has some thought of penitence flashed through his brain ? Has he formed some secret resolution to pray ? If so, there are real results, even though the leader may never know of them.

But if, when the leader announces some results as ' the

* The word ' Mind ' is used here frequently in the sense of the whole mental and spiritual nature of man, i.e. his whole consciousness, including thought, feeling, and will.

conclusion we have come to,' this receives an outward assent, but raises an inward doubt or revolt in the recesses of the member's soul, then, as far as this member is concerned, the real result is the doubt or revolt, and assuredly not the conclusion announced.

It is just in this inward region that the leader seems to have least power. He may control a discussion, but how can he control the thoughts and feelings of the members? He can only control them as man controls the forces of nature, by respecting and obeying their laws. Let us consider an analogy.

The life of a fruit-tree is as impenetrable as the life of the human mind. We can watch it growing, but we cannot get inside and *see* it grow. Yet the fruit-grower has much to do with the fruit it bears, for he can in many ways control the conditions of its growth. Once he understands what chemical foods it needs and can assimilate, he can supply these foods in the proper quantities and at the proper times; he can put it in a position where it can receive the sunlight; he can dig up the soil and manipulate it, so that the young roots shall have the greatest encouragement to spread forth: he can influence it in many ways.

In a word, by understanding the laws of its growth he can supply it with the most favourable conditions for fruit-bearing. So the leader, whilst he cannot directly reach the inner lives of others, can yet supply the most favourable conditions for their growth.

Let it not be thought that in studying the laws of the mind, and in working according to them, we are, as it were, trying to accomplish by human means that which belongs to God. We do so no more than the farmer who studies the soil and the seasons and the habits of his trees and crops, nor any more than the doctor who studies the laws of health. The laws of nature, the laws of the body, and the laws of the mind are all God's making, and meant for us to know and obey. When we have studied and utilized them to the utmost, it is 'God that giveth the increase'; but the laws remain all the same and are intended for our guidance.

This much at least is obvious from this short introduction, that the field of operations where our success or failure is

determined, is not in the mind of the leader, but in the mind of the members. It is what *they think* that matters, and not what the leader wants them to think. It is what they hear and receive that matters, and not what is said. It is the purpose formed within, and not the work dictated to them, that constitutes the net outcome of all the leader's work. It therefore behoves the leader from the commencement to study everything from the members' point of view. He must understand their view point in general and in particular. He must know them. He must study them more than he studies the subject.

If he will do this, he need not fear the result. God is behind him. God wants all His people to be possessed with missionary conviction, enthusiasm, and purpose ; and wants all men to be His people. The fruit is natural to the tree, and is only waiting skilful culture to bring it forth in abundance.

The Member's Aims.

It is well to begin by considering what are the general aims which the member possesses in joining the Circle. They will certainly not be identical with those possessed by the leader, nor with those analysed and expounded in the previous chapter.

In the case of a keen member the actuating purposes may be approximate to those already stated, but will exist in his mind in a more vague and indefinite form. He will regard the Circle as a means of deepening his missionary interest, and helping forward his spiritual growth, and these may be the chief reason for joining. If he has confidence in the leader, he may also dimly expect to receive training which will make him a more efficient worker, and will look forward to increased activity as a natural result of the meetings. But throughout, these aims will be less defined, and deprived of that sense of responsibility which is the outcome of the leader's position.

Many Circles will contain members whose interest in Missions is just newly awakened. In their case there will be little desire either for training or for increased activity. If the spiritual life be already strong, there will be a strong, though vague, sense of duty in joining the Circle. One who has loved his Bible for years, but has only just come to see its missionary bearing, will have a keen desire to know what light the Bible brings to bear upon each missionary problem.

But more usually the one who is only just beginning to take an interest in Missions is only just beginning to take an interest in spiritual things at all. In such a case the impelling motive may be a sense of ignorance, and may be summed up in the sentence: 'I feel I know nothing about Missions, and I want to know more.'

Lastly, to take an extreme case, a member may be quite devoid of missionary interest, and may merely have joined a Circle because he did not like to refuse the invitation, or because he has relatives in the country being studied, or for some other accidental reason.

It cannot be assumed that the keenness of a member will be proportioned to his existing interest in Missions. No person is a greater thorn in the leader's side than the one who thinks he already knows all about the subject that is worth knowing, and will, therefore, take no trouble to learn; and none is more helpful than the beginner whose sense of his own ignorance and arrears of interest is so keen that he will do anything to learn and increase his interest.

The leader must, therefore, be on the look-out for many differences in the aims of the members, though a desire for knowledge and a broad sense of duty will in some degree permeate them all.

He will find out their purposes partly from general conversation, partly from his personal knowledge of each individual, and particularly at the preliminary or organization meeting, when a general discussion on the purpose of the Circle may take place. His surest indication will be by watching their actions. Those who keenly prepare every Bible Assignment may be taken to be keen on their Bibles, those who do much outside reading on increasing their range of knowledge, and so on.

The importance of recognizing the different aims and motives which animate the members is evident. When I enter a Circle with certain aims, then whatever comes within their scope will draw out all my energies and enthusiasm. It is in pursuance of these aims (and of no others) that I shall do my best and heartiest work. My aims are the propelling power within me, the motive force compelling me to action. Other people's aims compel them, but they do not compel me.

In some such way each person feels. The task, which comes under the scope of an existing aim, has the motive power ready for its performance; whereas any other is only a species of slave labour, done as drudgery, if done at all.

The Member's Experiences.

We next turn to the member's experiences within the Circle session. The Circle session is the time above all when the leader has his great opportunity. But it is an opportunity which only a thorough grasp of the member's view point can enable him to utilize.

For here comes in the gulf between mind and mind, and between speaker and listener, which underlies so much of the Circle method. The surest way of understanding that method is to begin by patiently attending to the member's point of view.

For most of his time the member is, of course, a listener. If there are eight members in a Circle besides the leader, and all speak an equal amount, then each spends eight-ninths of his time in listening.

Now it is a common assumption on the part of a speaker that every one is listening to him, and that therefore the same thoughts are passing through their minds as through his own. But this is by no means the case.

The Difficulty of Listening.

The reader only needs to reflect in order to see how difficult a matter it is to attend continuously for any length of time. Let him pause now and ask himself how much he can remember of last Sunday's sermons. 'Well,' he replies, 'not much, I confess; but I was listening at the time.' It is perhaps possible to listen for twenty minutes or more and never miss a word with a good speaker, having a clear and pleasing voice, and if the address be interspersed with illustration and anecdote and well-arranged. But in more average cases has not the banging of a door, or the entrance of a late comer distracted us only too easily? And when we have settled down again has not the mention of some name or topic, which had recently been in our thoughts, revived memories and started us upon a train of reflection so vivid

that we waked up a few seconds later to find that we had wandered.

These tangential trains of thought are not only natural, but inevitable. For the listener is to the speaker in the relation of one playing the game of 'follow-my-leader.' The speaker can wander where he will, and the listener has to follow him step by step. As the speaker produces each sentence *he* knows what is coming next, but the listener has to wait and hear. To test this, make a single experiment. Let some one begin to talk to a group of three or four people, and then stop suddenly, and let each write down what they think he was going to say next. Their guesses will all be somewhat different from the speaker's intention, and different from each other. The sequence of thought which seems natural to the listener is not the same as that which the speaker is pursuing. Therefore in listening it is necessary to exert a continuous effort in order to check our thoughts from following out their natural bent, and to follow in the speaker's tracks.

Further, the listener is in a constant dilemma. For if he tries to reflect upon and think out the consequences of the sentence he has just heard, he must miss the following ones, whereas if he follows the speaker continuously he never has time to reflect upon and fully appreciate anything!

If these difficulties are inherent in listening where there is the will to attend and favourable circumstances, how hard it is made where these do not exist!

The leader should supplement the foregoing brief analysis by taking note of his own experiences in listening, watching (*a*) the distractions, (*b*) the tangential trains of thought, and (*c*) the difficulty of both listening closely and yet reflecting upon what is said.

Aids to Attention.

The three difficulties just mentioned may be minimized as follows:—

(*a*) A *clear voice* and enunciation and a good delivery do much to counteract distracting influences. Further aids are an enthusiastic manner, and a graphic concrete and anecdotal style. Once a Study Circle member was asked

to read a paper on the African Liquor Traffic from the native point of view. He commenced, in a pathetic voice, 'I am an African. My wife drinks! . . .' This graphic opening secured him complete attention.

(*b*) *System and method* in presentation does much to check wandering thoughts. If the speaker pursues a natural and logical sequence of ideas, then there is less danger of his setting the thoughts of others travelling in a different direction from his own.

(*c*) *Recapitulation*, at proper intervals, will give the listeners an opportunity to look back, reflect and summarize what has been said. If this be done, not only at the end, but in stages, as each idea is developed and elaborated, it will not only make listening easier but will allow notes to be taken if desired.

Suggestion.

The tangential trains of thought referred to need not be regarded as an evil. On the contrary they belong to the very nature of mental life. What is evil is when the leader disregards them and imagines that speaker and listeners are all thinking alike.

Upon the utilization of this tendency of the mind to pursue trains of thought interesting to itself, but started by something seen or heard from outside, hangs the whole art of 'suggestion.' The subject is so wide as to occupy whole treatises,* and the leader who knows how to be suggestive has learned an invaluable art.

The power of suggestion depends upon the speaker's knowledge of the hearer and the respect with which he inspires him. It depends upon the real conviction of the speaker, and the tact and gradualness with which the idea is presented. Often 'the less said the better.'

A Study Circle leader once taking a group of girls asked them to imagine themselves a committee of missionaries, and then said with an encouraging smile, 'We might be, some day!' By this suggestion and the trains of thought it aroused, more good may have been done than by all that followed.

* E.g., Keatinge, *Suggestion*.

Degrees of Attention.

Apart from all divergencies of thought between speaker and listener, and assuming the latter's thoughts are confined to the prescribed channel, there may still be degrees of attention. We shall notice three, naming them attention, absorption, and boredom.

(*a*) *Attention.*—' Systematic thought is the controlling of a train of ideas which would flow on in some course if not controlled, but would not tend towards a predetermined end. . . . To fulfil the purpose we must work out the appropriate means; that is, we must secure that they occupy our minds to the exclusion of divergent thoughts and suggestions. This concentration on the means, step by step, from the beginning of the process to the accomplishment, is the work of attention.' *

From this definition it is clear that the highest degree of attention must be shot through with purpose and more or less conscious effort. It cannot be purely a passive affair, waiting on the will of another. The bearing of this on the ' Aim,' and on all Study Circle work will be shown over and over in this manual.

(*b*) *Absorption.*—This is the name given by some authors to the type of attention which is determined by the objects around us and the emotions they raise, rather than by purposes from within. It is the sort of attention given to a landscape which we are enjoying for the moment, as distinguished from that we give to one we purpose to reproduce in a picture afterwards. Or again, it is the sort of attention paid to an entertaining lecture or cinematograph show, when the mind relaxes itself and allows itself to be led along, absorbed for the moment, but with no active purpose for the future.

(*c*) *Boredom.*—It will be observed that in absorption there is an emotional interest, and in attention there is a practical or purposeful interest also, but there is a type of listening (can we call it attention ?) in which both are absent, which may be described as boredom. The listener listens out of respect, or for conventional reasons, or because he is too tired to think

* Welton, *Psychology of Education*, p. 251.

along other lines; but his listening is like listening to the rattle of machinery, in which his only purpose and desire is to reach the time when it will be over.

Let the leader pause and examine his own experiences in listening, and how far they come under each of these three heads. And then let him have mercy upon others!

Boredom is chiefly experienced in the presence of incessant talkers, who choose their own topics of conversation instead of consulting the interests of others. What a lesson for the Study Circle leader lies here!

How often would boredom or absorption have been turned to attention, had the speaker stopped to ask a question, and waited for the answer.

Personal Factors in Attention.

Apart from the manner and style of the speaker, the amount of attention given depends upon the interest possessed by the listener in the subject.

This interest may be *practical.* We listen to that which will affect our action. The mere fact that we have to give a vote upon a matter in a committee will enable us to listen to a very dull discussion till we have made up our mind how to vote and then, suddenly, we find we can listen no longer. The ordinary question and answer exemplify this type of interest. We listen to a question personally addressed to us far more attentively than to one addressed to a whole assembly, for the simple reason that we have to listen in order to frame an answer.

The interest may be *emotional.* We listen more intently the more our feelings are stirred, or the more the speaker deals with subjects which directly affect ourselves and our own interests. How keenly an examination list is listened to by the students concerned!

Those who love their Bible will attend to anything concerning the Bible, and the attention paid to the discussion of a given person will be greatly enhanced on the part of those who entertain strong feelings towards him.

The degree of attention depends also upon the speaker and the value attached to his utterances.

The interest may be *intellectual*. Such interest is due to previous knowledge of the subject and a desire to know more. Neither the absolutely new nor the absolutely old attracts us, but new light upon a familiar subject.

Close attention is given to the discussion, in proportion as the chapter has been thoroughly read. In the matter of Assignments, the more the question has become familiar, the more eagerly the various answers will be listened for. A good Assignment or question has an effect upon the mind like the advertiser's notice, 'Watch this space.' It calls attention to a blank about to be filled up and excites curiosity, which is the key to intellectual interest.

A question which has originated in the listener's mind and has remained only partially solved has the same effect. A leader who could divine the unsolved questions in the members' minds and could raise a discussion concerning them, could be sure of a deeply attentive Circle.

Listening to a Discussion.

We have passed insensibly from the experience of the member in listening to one person to that of listening to a discussion. Upon the whole the latter is easier, even if he take no part himself.

A prepared paper is more carefully expressed, more systematic, and often of greater intrinsic value.

But a discussion (if clearly heard) gains in interest by the variety of voice and manner and by the play of personality. In a discussion, moreover, even the silent listener is on a par with the rest; they hear questions as he does and answer them as he might do. It is all democratic, spontaneous, and informal.

It is particularly interesting to hear one's own opinion expressed, defended, or attacked.

Taking Part in a Discussion.

If the listener has the privilege of taking part in the discussion as he wishes, it makes it still more his own. If he actually joins in, the very act of talking, voting, or otherwise expressing himself, however slight his contribution, colours and transfigures the whole. It just constitutes the difference

between the member and the spectators, and anyone who has occupied both positions is aware of the gulf that separates them.

The member who permanently remains silent and passive becomes really a spectator, and such a spectator will seldom retain his interest for long. Either he will take some part, however small, or he will feel more and more an outsider and finally drop out.

Let us put ourselves in his position and ask ourselves what are the causes that might prevent us taking any active part in the discussion.

Causes of Silence.

(1) I may be silent because the whole subject bores me. The chapter did not interest me, nor the Assignments, and I do not care what the others think or say about it.

(2) I may not have read the chapter, and not wishing to expose myself, I wish to lie low and escape detection.

(3) I may have read the chapter and liked it, but I found the Assignments hard. The others will have more to say than I, and I do not wish to put myself in comparison with them.

(4) Perhaps I don't like the other members. Either I am serious and find them young and flippant, or *vice versa*. It may be one or two very dogmatic members irritate me ; or it may be I do not like to express my views before my own clergy.

The above reasons may all be more or less permanent, and may lead to resignation. The following reasons are of a different and more hopeful character.

(5) I know I cannot express myself fluently on the spur of the moment and feel nervous of trying to do so, especially on a fresh subject.

(6) I prefer to listen, because I really value what is being said. I feel I learn so much from others.

(7) I may be reflecting on what has been said and following out my own thoughts.

(8) I may be silent for some conventional reason ; I am the youngest present, or I talked too much at a previous meeting and don't want to do so again.

(9) I may have lost the thread and be waiting for a lead. Or, I do not quite know what the leader is driving at in his questions.

(10) Most commonly I am silent because I am waiting for others to speak and there is no special reason why I should begin.

The above enumeration of causes may easily be improved upon. But it shows that silence has many causes, some good and some evil. The cure for the evil ones will be found in Chapters V. and VIII.

Motives for Taking Part in a Discussion.

(1) The simplest motive is the conventional necessity of answering a question directed personally to myself. If asked, 'Mr. X, have you ever read Henry Martyn's life?' I must reply, 'Yes' or 'No.'

Should the question be one of fact on which I am ignorant, or should it be too personal, I might resent it and be silent. But if it is natural and courteous, and directed to me by name, I answer it if I can.

(2) I may be stirred up to contradict or to confirm some opinion just expressed. The more strongly I feel, the more I shall feel bound to speak. For instance, a denunciation of Roman Catholics may stir me to defend them, or *vice versa*.

(3) I may take part because a question is being passed round. The others are speaking and I feel I must do the same; I am ashamed to be always silent.

(4) I may want to ask a question or get clear about some doubtful point.

(5) I may just want to contribute my quota to the discussion. If a list is being made and I have something to add which no one has mentioned, or if an apt illustration occurs to my mind, or if I have read something in the paper recently which bears on the point, I want to tell it.

(6) I may join in from a desire in common with the rest to achieve the Aim of the meeting and discuss the question raised. This spirit of co-operation is the natural and normal attitude of keen members.

The Power of Convention.

The alternative of silence or taking part is wonderfully affected by convention. I may be just ready to speak, but I remember my elders are present who should speak first; or I fear to express myself too bluntly before strangers; or it may be that the others are silent, expecting the leader to go on, and I don't like to break through the silence.

The power of convention is accentuated when the members are strange to each other, or drawn from different social classes, or even by a mixture of both sexes, or by a marked difference of ages.

The leader must reckon with this, and remember how we all tend to do what is expected of us. By expecting people to speak he will get them to speak, and *vice versa*.

The Effect of Self-Activity.

Experience leaves no room for doubt that the depth of the impression upon each member is directly proportionate to his self-activity, either in taking part himself, or in listening with attention and purpose.

Other things being equal, men are more impressed by what they say than by what they hear. In the process of listening, the attention may be very slight, the words passing in at one ear and out of the other; but in speaking, attention must perforce be paid in order that the thoughts may be constructed and expressed. The mere exercise of the vocal organs involved in speaking tends to make the experience more vivid and living.

The relationship between speaking and hearing is somewhat analogous to that between one's own experience and the account of another's experience. The former has a vividness and directness in our own consciousness, whereas the latter comes to us from without, and only enters into our own experience as a sort of reflection or echo. The parallel is by no means complete, but certainly the expression of our own thoughts in speaking or writing leaves a more lasting impression upon the mind than listening to other people's.

This may be amusingly illustrated by asking the members of a Circle, without warning, to write down all they can

remember about a previous meeting. It will be found that each account is coloured by the member's own self-activity. He produces a fuller account of his own contributions and opinions, and the discussion that centred round them. If the leader, or one member, has monopolized a large section of the time, he will be the only one who can give a connected account of that section.

All these considerations only emphasize that the value of the Study Circle is entirely dependent upon the members. What matters is what they attend to; what they think, and feel, and say, and do.

The Importance of Preparation.

The tendency of the leader is to regard the meeting of the Circle as more important than the member's preparation for it. But the preparation usually occupies more time than the meeting. Moreover, in the meeting a member may be only passively interested, but during his preparation his mind is actively interested all the time. Indeed, there may be many members who chiefly value the meeting not for what they learn, but just because it gives them the necessary stimulus to read and think for themselves. It renders their study regular, methodical, and pointed by raising questions which few would have either time or originality or tenacity of purpose to set themselves.

Further, the book remains for reference and consultation, when the discussions have vanished and leave only a vague memory behind them. Besides, the discussions themselves derive their chief interest from the preparation that has been put into them.

As the importance of preparation thus emerges, we again put ourselves in the member's place and ask, 'Why should I prepare?'

The Time Difficulty of Preparation.

It is intensely interesting to observe the type of people who raise the difficulty, 'I have no time for preparation.' They are not conspicuously those who have least leisure. On the contrary, the busiest people are generally the best prepared, and seldom raise the question of time. The two

chief grounds of this complaint seem to be lack of interest and lack of system.

When we reflect how we invariably find time for what is worth while, it leads us to conclude that we have time for those things which we value sufficiently highly, and that the rest get squeezed out. Every man has twenty-four hours in the day which he must spend somehow or other. When a new demand comes, of whatever character, some displacement has to be made. The new claimant has to establish its superior value, at least for the time being, to some of the present occupants of those hours which are at our own disposal. The actual question for the systematic man is, 'Do I at present spend any hour in the week less usefully than I should in this preparation?' and the weakest competitor for his interest, i.e. his time, has to go to the wall.

The writer knows of six young men in business who attended a Study Circle daily for three days, and got up an hour earlier than usual each day to prepare. They came professing 'no interest in Missions,' but they got keen enough at the first meeting to value their preparation more than their sleep.

But, perhaps with more people, the root of the difficulty is lack of system. If only they would think of the hours weekly spent in reading newspapers or novels, in useless conversation, in amusements and in vacant idle moments, they would realize how much time might be redeemed for this and other purposes.

It is undoubtedly much easier to find time when a definite time is fixed, e.g., Sunday evening, or an hour before breakfast some morning. The leader may give much help to his members by pointing out to them tactfully the true causes of this difficulty and helping them to overcome it.

Motives for Preparation.

The motive for preparation is a part of the motive for joining the Circle at all. One element in it is sure to be a sense of duty, and this with other motives (see p. 10) may be appealed to and stimulated by the leader.

But the leader's best means of securing preparation is to expect it. In Circles that have failed (thank God, they are

few), one frequent cause of failure was that the leader never expected them to prepare, and that they never prepared in consequence. What a wrong was done to them! On the other hand many a leader of a group of factory lads, working late into the evening, has put before them a high ideal and trusted them to reach it; and they have surprised themselves and him by the keenness and excellence of their work. Nothing can exceed the power of a quiet expectation.

A further motive to preparation lies in the interest taken in the subject and in the Assignments. A leader who knows how to stir our interest in the coming chapter and in the Assignments, by getting us to talk about them, and raising questions in our mind about them, and making us feel their value now and for the future, has given us a motive to prepare (see also p. 69).

After a while, preparation becomes habitual.

Conclusion.

We have traced the member's experiences in listening, discussing, and preparing. What relation do they bear to the aims set before us in the previous chapter?

They form a foundation upon which we must build up our special means for securing these aims. The next three chapters select three of those aims for special consideration: namely—the formation of convictions, the growth of interest, and the training of habits of service.

CHAPTER III

THF FORMATION OF CONVICTIONS

The Need of Convictions.

The world can never be evangelized by enthusiasm alone, unless guided and directed by judgment. For enthusiasm without judgment is like an untamed horse, fiery and energetic, but needing to be yoked to useful ends, and to be guided along a safe path.

Clear, intellectual and spiritual convictions are therefore needed as to why Missions are necessary, and how the work should be conducted.

The Convictions Needed.

The general aim will be to bring the Circle to see the world as Christ sees it, and conform their minds to His upon the missionary question. To this end the leader will put himself in the position of a learner with the rest, and, taking the Bible as their guide and final authority, they will seek to gain an insight into missionary problems. The judgments of the wisest and greatest missionary leaders of the past will also be given due weight.

The ideal is not that the leader should prepare minutely a set of cut-and-dried conclusions which he is going to 'teach' the others. But rather they will seek together to deepen their understanding of broad general principles of Missions, and extend their knowledge of their detailed application.

Such truths as that (1) all have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; (2) God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth ; or (3) that Christ is

the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no man cometh to the Father but by Him, are typical of the convictions which it is desirable to form.

It may be said: 'But every Christian believes these things, because they are in the Bible.' Yes, but it is necessary to confirm and deepen their belief by the extension of these general truths to a great number of particular applications. To take the first of them as an example: a frank consideration of the spiritual and moral condition of pagan Africa helps to give a wider content of meaning and a deeper certainty to the truth that 'all have sinned.' Such heresies as that 'the heathen are living up to their light' are driven away by the study of the facts, and the word of God is confirmed and illustrated.

The convictions to be formed will also include many of a more detailed and modern character: as for example that the spread of Islam in Africa is a menace and a reproach to the Church to-day, or that there is an imperative call to-day to take advantage of the mass movements towards Christianity in India.

In fact any conviction which is in accordance with God's will, and which tends to the evangelization of the world, will come within our aims.

The Character of True Convictions.

To be effective, convictions should be definite and deep.

Definite convictions are necessary for clear thinking and vigorous action. Vague general impressions are soon forgotten, and when the opportunity for action comes they have little power. We must aim, therefore, at convictions which shall be clearly defined and understood, sharply cut and deeply impressed on the tablets of the mind, and therefore capable of expression and application.

Convictions, also, to be worthy of the name, must be *deep*. They need to be firmly founded upon knowledge, earnest thought, and thorough discussion. In addition to this they must have stirred the emotions and be capable of stirring them again. They must be felt deeply as well as seen clearly.

Further, they must create in the mind of the holder a sense of responsibility. A man cannot be said to have really deep

convictions concerning the need of others unless he is striving to help them. The convictions we aim at are such as will influence the life and the will.

It is the object of the present chapter to examine how convictions of this character can be built up, grounded upon knowledge, clearly understood, and such as to influence profoundly the lives of men.

The Life-Story of a Conviction.

At this stage it will be useful to the reader if he will lay down the book, and selecting some particular conviction which he holds, search his memory as to how he came by it. He will then find it interesting to compare his experience with the imaginary example that follows.

A certain person, X, is now deeply convinced that the Bible is the inspired word of God, true and trustworthy throughout. A few years ago he had been reading about the Higher Criticism and was much confused. On examination he can trace the following three stages in the formation of his present conviction.

The first stage is represented by *interest in the problem.* Soon after his conversion, he commenced the habit of daily Bible-reading, and in order to understand better he read commentaries, and so found the trustworthiness of the Bible challenged. He felt the importance of the subject to his own spiritual life, and so inquired and began to gather information.

The second stage is represented by the *reaching of the conclusion.* In the course of his inquiries and talks with others he discovers that all the rationalists (and he profoundly distrusts rationalism) are upon one side, and many of the keenest evangelists (whom he trusts) are upon the other. He tests both sides in certain detailed cases (so trenching on the next stage). He thinks he finds inconsistencies in the critics, whom he now comes to regard as opponents, and gradually comes to define and settle his conclusions.

The third stage is that of *application.* X now regards himself as a believer in inspiration. He identifies not only the problem (as in the first stage), but also the conclusion, with himself. He applies it to solve other questions and to decide particular cases. He tests it in practice and finds it to work,

If apparent difficulties arise, he finds solutions for them. He propagates his belief and defends it when attacked. Thus he becomes fully convinced.

The three stages are not clearly marked. The interest in the problem increases in the second and third stages, and merges into his interest in his own conclusions.

The clearing and definition of his views belongs to the first and last stages as well as to the middle one, and a certain amount of testing is necessary before he reaches his conclusion. Yet the division will be found a useful one.

Herbart's 'Five Steps.'

Books on education generally devote considerable attention to what are called Herbart's 'Five Steps of Teaching': namely—Preparation, Presentation, Comparison, Generalization or Definition, and Application. These terms are applied to what goes on in the mind of the pupil during an ordinary lesson.

In the first step the pupil's mind is prepared by the recall of knowledge already possessed and his interest excited in the new problem. It coincides roughly with our first stage under the previous heading.

In the second step the new data are presented to him, out of which the substance of the lesson is to be built. In the third step he is led to compare these data with each other, and with existing ideas, until the general truth contained in them begins to emerge. In the fourth step, this new truth is defined and put into the shape of a generalization. These three steps correspond to our second stage.

In the fifth step the new rule or generalization acquired is applied to work out old or new problems—to be tested and verified and used in every possible way. This corresponds with our third stage.*

In school teaching, as in ordinary experience, these steps cannot be rigidly marked off one from another. But a study of them in any manual on teaching will be a real help to the Study Circle leader.

* For a full discussion of the 'Five Steps,' see McMurry, *The Method of the Recitation*, chaps. vi. and ix.

Interest in the Problem.

The subject of interest will be more fully treated in the next chapter. It is only necessary here to point out its fundamental character in the formation of convictions.

If any question discussed in a Circle does not interest a certain member, the conclusion will be to him as an external thing, and no part of his very self. It will not be applied and will be soon forgotten. It will be like a branch tied on to a tree, whereas the conclusion where interest exists is like a natural branch growing out of and becoming part of the tree itself.

The interest in the problem may be very slight and fortuitous, it may only be due to curiosity or a desire to debate ; but sufficient feeling must be aroused to create a desire to see the problem solved.

Unless an appetite for the conclusion be aroused from within it will not be received and assimilated.

For this reason the leader must seek to raise problems and questions likely to interest the members ; and he must pay special attention to the questions they raise themselves. One question from a member is worth two from the leader.

Research into our own convictions will show how much more value is to be attached to the questionings stirred in our own minds by individual reading and thinking, than to more united work. The leader therefore must stimulate such questionings. (See Chapter IV.)

Interest in the Facts.

In the Study Circle method the giving out of the Aim and Assignments corresponds with Herbart's first step of Preparation. The reading of the chapter to be studied (supplemented by extra material 'presented' in the discussion), corresponds to the second step of Presentation. If the facts, which are the foundation of convictions, are to be assimilated, interest must also be aroused in them.

Why is it that so often a second-rate novel is more interesting intrinsically than a first-rate missionary book ? Is not one reason the remoteness of the latter from our daily life ? It is a well-worn maxim of teaching to proceed from the

known to the unknown, and a brilliant example of this is found in the parables of our Lord. The brain is not a warehouse of facts, but rather a bundle of activities. It becomes habituated to respond to certain appeals which occur in the daily routine, and responds readily when stimulated along these lines. Almost any audience will listen to an illustration drawn from food!

The leader must bring home the subject matter to the experience of the members; he must study both and find some relationship which will bridge the gulf between the two, and, if possible, work this into the Aim or Assignments. At least he must strive to make them feel the importance of knowing these things which he wishes them to learn.

A few simple questions are very valuable for arousing their own activities. For example, the question, 'Who could answer off-hand the number of Missionary Societies working in Africa?' would be a much surer way of getting them to work at these facts, than an appeal to 'study carefully the facts on page so and so.' It is always their own activities that count, and the leader should never allow himself to save them the trouble of thinking and discovering for themselves. They must be encouraged to raise their own questions, discover their own ignorance, and formulate their own needs. He may rightly, however, help them to answer their own questions by suggesting lines of study, books to read or authorities to consult.

Clear Grasp of the Facts.

Infinite harm is continually being done by loose general statements being made about Missions which cannot be supported by a single definite fact. On the other hand mere statistics are equally useless. What is required is a clear picture of certain typical facts, such as the man who has been abroad possesses by experience.

To acquire this, maps and diagrams must be made by the Circle themselves. Pictures must not only be looked at, but studied. The leader who is always on the alert to challenge the members to produce facts to substantiate their assertions is doing them an inestimable service. Adults need these exercises as much as children; indeed, some of the cleverest

people need them most. Members should be encouraged to look up questions of fact upon which any doubt arises.

Reaching Conclusions.

The discussion in the Study Circle meeting, together with the individual preparation of the Assignments, cover Herbart's third and fourth steps of Comparison and Generalization. The Assignments are intended to foster observation, to give precision of thought, and to cause definition.

The leader in many, perhaps most, Circles, must be on the look out to give help to the members as to how to read a text-book, how to use the analysis, to make notes, &c. The uneasy feeling that an Assignment is 'vague,' or 'difficult' often proceeds from lack of familiarity with any form of study. Such help should only be proffered where likely to be welcomed.

The most valuable conclusions will often be reached in private study. In respect of such as are reached during the session the leader should again beware of attempting to do the work of comparison and definition for the Circle. No greater injury can be done the members than to deprive them of 'the divine right of discovery.' A riddle is deprived of all its flavour if the answer is told too soon. People enjoy climbing mountains, but only the feeble enjoy being carried up.

As most of our own convictions have had their growth accompanied by much emotion, the leader must endeavour to cultivate due enthusiasm and feeling in the discussion of every problem. Our Lord was continually arousing and training the emotions of His disciples. In a single chapter we are told that He aroused intense curiosity (St. Mark, vi. 2), fervent zeal for repentance (7–12), deep compassion (37), amazement (51), and a spirit of dependence on Himself (55).

Likewise the leader must see that the religious feelings of the members are appealed to. The discussion must never be academic; but compassion for the Heathen, love and gratitude to the Saviour, desire to glorify Him, and feelings of utter dependence upon God must be aroused each in its place.

Application.

Inside the Circle meeting, the defence or application of a conclusion previously formed, and its exercise in intercession, and outside the Circle, its propagation, all corresponds to Herbart's fifth step of Application.

The process of definition is carried over into this stage. The old lady who marked against each promise of the Bible which she had proved in experience the letters 'T. P.' (tried and proved) was going through the stage of application, respecting her conviction of the truth of God's word. So the Circle members must be encouraged to try and prove their conclusions.

This process, combined with that of their defence and propagation, will add power to the conviction in three ways. It will firstly give it *extension* of range, as each application is made in a new direction. It will secondly give it *depth* of meaning, as it is understood more and more clearly. It will finally give it *utility* as it becomes more and more ready for use at a moment's notice and in different ways.

Depth of Conviction.

How few remain of the scores of impressions which flit through our minds! Only those gain a lodgment which produce in us some activity, mental or bodily. In the language of psychology, it is the 'motor consequence' that determines the strength of the impression. Our deepest convictions are those which most effectively stir us to activity.

This is only another way of saying that our deepest convictions are those which we most closely identify with ourselves. At first, as we saw, a tiny, almost accidental, interest in a problem turns our thoughts in a certain direction. Gradually a conclusion is formed, it is widened and deepened and other beliefs and conclusions congregate around it, and lo! it is a part of ourselves. The formation of convictions is creative work, for it is the formation of personality.

CHAPTER IV

INTEREST

The Need of Interest.

In all home-work for Foreign Missions indifference is recognized as the great enemy. *Per contra*, interest leading on to enthusiasm and passion is the prime necessity.

Interest in the problem is the first stage in the formation of convictions; interest in the Assignments is needed to produce careful preparation; and interest in the discussion is required in order that it may be duly heeded and taken in. On all sides interest is necessary, as much as steam is necessary to make the engine go. The most perfect machinery is useless without the propelling force.

It is vital, therefore, to all our work that we should have a clear idea as to what we mean by 'interest,' and of the laws which control its growth.

Intellectual Interest.

Interest may be chiefly intellectual (see p. 17). In this case the mind is chiefly concerned, as when a person is interested in such a subject as the religion and doctrines of Islam. The interest proceeds from a certain knowledge of, and liking for, the subject, and exhibits itself in a desire to know more about it.

It is prompted by the instinct of curiosity, and the existing knowledge sends out its tentacles in every direction, and grasps and assimilates all that will minister to the intellectual appetite. The more it is fed the stronger it grows. Such an interest is continually forming new associations and connexions until, to change the metaphor, it is like a vast railway system,

always branching out in new directions and always increasing in complexity and in extent.

Emotional Interests.

Interest may be chiefly emotional. Here the heart is concerned, as when the members of a Circle are moved by pity for the pariahs of India, and earnestly desirous to help them. The emotion tends to fulfil itself in an appropriate way, and to extend the experience. There is, perhaps, no stronger source of interest in Missions than the love of Christ, which is, strictly speaking, in the nature of an emotion. Interest of an emotional kind has the utmost value when rightly guided by knowledge and directed into practical channels, and it must ever be a chief aim of the leader to excite it. Emotions are more easily roused, under favourable conditions, amongst a group of people, than individually. Love, sympathy, horror of evil, joy over Christ's victories, and everything that makes the heart go out to the work and produces enthusiasm must be encouraged.

Practical Interest.

Most of the interests of life are chiefly practical. They concern the active powers of the body. The mere fact of having to do something impels us to take a certain interest in it. So men are interested in their business, their games, their home life, and in fact in every action they have to perform.

The little fellow, who was met hurrying with his missionary box to the quarterly box-opening, and who declared, 'You know, I'm part of the Society!' had a practical interest in his box, and in the Society. Every interest which is concerned with the accomplishment of some end, partakes of this practical nature. Every worker for Missions has this practical interest perforce, however little they know or care.

Definition of Interest.

The reader will perhaps say that every interest really has all three sides—intellectual, emotional, and practical—in some degree; and this is indeed true. Sometimes one predominates, sometimes another; but we shall see more and more

how they are interwoven one with another. Some sense of curiosity, some sense of value and desire, some sense of purpose, pervades all our interests.

One idea will be perceived throughout—namely, that contained in the etymology of the word interest, 'to be in a thing,' to feel it more or less a personal concern. Wherever interest exists we tend to identify the object with ourselves, and there is a tendency always to extend and strengthen the connexion. Where there is interest, knowledge, feeling, and action all tend to grow, and we tend more and more to make it part of ourselves.

Viewed somewhat differently, we may say that our interests determine the direction of our mental activities. What is interesting to us absorbs our attention and calls forth our emotion and action to the exclusion of other things. The energies supplied by our instincts and vital powers of nerve and limb, are directed into their respective channels by the controlling interests. The man who is interested in Missions more than in politics does not thereby increase or decrease his physical powers; but his interest in Missions determines how those physical powers shall be applied. The physical and vital powers are like the boiler where the steam is generated, and the ruling interests are the stop-cocks and pipes which direct its application, and convey the steam into the appropriate machine.

Even spiritual energy, given of God (as indeed are all our powers), finds its outlet according to our interests.

Purpose and Interest.

When any purpose is formed, anything connected with its accomplishment becomes interesting. A person who agrees to give a missionary address is at once interested in its preparation and all that ministers to it. A person who joins a Study Circle, with the purpose of studying a book, is thereby interested, even before he opens the book. If, at the opening of a meeting, he be asked to take notes and prepare minutes for next time, the end in view gives him a practical interest in the discussion. Even so slight a thing as being asked to read an Assignment fixes his attention all the more closely upon it. Whatever a person has to do is his concern and

therefore interesting to him. Hence it is a prime motto for the Study Circle leader, 'Never do anything yourself which you can get some one else to do.' The object of this is not to save himself trouble, for it may cost him more trouble than doing it himself, but it is the surest way to interest others.

The activity involved in the purpose may be purely intellectual: such as the solution of a problem, or the attainment of a given aim. But once the act of will is performed to seek this aim, it exercises a controlling interest over his thoughts, and at once directs their course to its attainment.

Desire and Interest.

Desire, purpose, and interest are all, in practice, closely associated. Desire is a feeling of want, the recognition of a need and a possible means of satisfying it. Desire then prompts to action in accordance with that means. For example, a person moved by the love of Christ desires to interest some new people in Missions, and recognizes that a Study Circle might be a means to this end. He therefore forms the purpose of starting one, and at once he is interested in doing so.

Take another example. The leader announces as Aim for a future chapter a problem which excites the curiosity of the members. This leads on to a desire for a satisfactory answer, and so to the purpose of working out such an answer, which then becomes a dominant interest controlling his activities.

We see, therefore, that in order to excite interest in a person we must know something about him and what will be most likely to arouse in him a sense of want and desire. We must know something of his estimation of different matters and the values he will attach to them. Everything will depend upon what he considers to be 'worth while.'

In some, intellectual interests will be most easily aroused; in some, the appeal will be by way of sympathy or duty; in some, by making some practical demand.

Permanent Interests.

It follows from what has preceded that we are most likely to be interested in that which has most deeply entered

into our own life. The stronger the feeling, the wider and deeper the thought; and the more strenuous the effort involved, the stronger and the more permanent the interest will be. Let the reader examine his own strongest interests and ask if this be not so.

Our object, therefore, is to establish for missionary work this big place in the lives of others. Sooner or later we must make big demands upon time and money and all that they hold dear, if their interest is to be proportionately strong. Most workers make the fatal mistake of asking too little. There are business men whose interest might be permanently gained by asking them to build a mission hospital, but who can never be won by being asked for a guinea subscription. The former would compel attention and stir deep feeling, whereas the latter does neither.

Likewise there are many who will listen seriously to a proposition that they should give up two hours a week to a Study Circle for two months, who would not pay attention to the notice of a single missionary meeting. And so throughout: the more time, effort, and feeling the leader can call forth, the deeper the interest he is building up.

One caution must be added. The amount of effort must not be so excessive as to cause revulsion, or else its effect acts with equal strength in the reverse direction.

Growth of Interest.

The wise leader never complains of lack of interest. He reflects how very tender a plant his own interest was at one time, and how easily its life might have been choked out altogether. He seeks, therefore, for whatever rudimentary and incipient interest there is and seeks to develop it.

It is the first stage that creates the difficulty, when indifference and ignorance go hand in hand. The member does not care enough to read, and he does not know enough to care. The difficulty is like that of the doctor whose patient is weak through lack of food, and whose appetite is gone because of his weakness.

However, the doctor has a way out, and it is the way for the Circle leader also. He first gives a little food, creating an appetite by an artificial stimulant if need be. Then the

patient is allowed to sit up. Then, with the first signs of appetite, more food; and so on, gradually increasing both the food and the exercise, but always preserving a proportion between them. So interest grows likewise. It begins in some trifling and perhaps artificial way. A schoolmistress, for example, was persuaded into joining a Study Circle, 'to see what it was like.' She wanted to do well and began preparing carefully. So interest grew, and when the leader left she was induced to take her place. Increased effort brought her more into the heart of things, and she is now a missionary in South India.

The Law of Association.

There is a law of thought which affords abounding encouragement to the leader in this matter, if only he will watch its operation and learn to utilize it. It is called the 'law of association,' whereby any two things which have been once connected in the mind tend for ever to be so connected. Let us take a few examples.

Here is a simple locket, of no intrinsic value, but dearly treasured by its owner because he cannot see it without thinking of one who has passed away and whom it always recalls. Again, here is the name of a place, the very sound of which calls up in our mind some memorable experience associated for ever with it. Here is a ploughed field, uninteresting enough in itself, but visited by thousands annually, because it is the site of Waterloo.

In all these cases some connexion is formed in the mind between an object of no intrinsic interest and one already interesting, and the interest in the latter is conveyed, like electricity, to all associated with it.

Any sort of link will do. A lady staying in a Swiss hotel, with no interest in Missions, was asked to join a Study Circle. The subject proposed was India; she happened to have a brother there, and so she joined. She soon became interested and wrote to her brother about it. He, for the first time, looked up the missionaries in his own station, and became interested too. Such things are constantly happening more or less by chance. It is the leader's privilege to make them happen by design.

He will search for the existing interests of his members, it may be in friends abroad, or books they have read, or what not; and he will forge links whereby these may be connected with Missions, as the electrician spends his time connecting up the machines he wants to work with the batteries which are to work them.

Direct and Indirect Interest.

It is useful here to distinguish between direct and indirect interest. A person who merely studies Missions in order to find out more about India has only an indirect interest in Missions; but one who does it for the sake of the subject is said to have a direct interest.

Now one of the most important applications of the law of association is that an indirect interest always tends to become a direct one, for the interest in the *end* suffuses itself over the *means* also. The lady in the above example soon became interested in Missions for their own sake. So, to repeat a former example, the member who is asked to take notes of a discussion will tend to find his direct interest in the discussion growing on this account.

Scores are now missionaries whose first interest was of an indirect character.

The First Beginning.

It is of the utmost importance, therefore, at the first beginning of a Circle of uninterested people to interest them in something. It is quite a secondary matter what that something is, for the mere association with the missionary Study Circle will tend to carry over the interest raised into the subject of Missions itself.

Curios, lantern-slides, photographs, an address, or anything which will interest, will be appropriate at the beginning, which might be out of place later on, once the interest is established. Tea, and the social element, are justifiable on the same grounds.

In the opening meetings it is of great importance to consult the members, find out where their interests lie and make the meetings interesting to them. Other results

may be sought later, but at the commencement this is paramount, that they should be sufficiently interested to continue their attendance.

Acquired Interests.

Every adult possesses his own stock of acquired interests. The leader must use his ingenuity to discover them and utilize them, for they represent the powers guiding his energies. Along these lines the member is sure to respond with interest and work.

The following headings will suggest useful directions in which to look for them.

Commonplace interests.—The parables of our Lord may be studied as a storehouse of suggestion. Modern life, with its daily newspapers, scientific inventions, &c., has also its distinctive features.

Such Assignments as the following use these interests: (*a*) What pictures and books in your house would not be there if Christ had never come to earth? (*b*) Bring to the next meeting anything about China from the daily papers. (*c*) What sights in an English village might impress an African?

Local interests.—Any comparisons drawn with regard to distances, populations, &c, gain in interest if given local colour. For example: (*a*) If an Indian student stayed a week-end with you, what local sights could you show him, and what ideas about our Christianity would he get from them? (*b*) Reckon roughly how many Christian workers there are in X—— to every 1,000 of the population, and compare this with the proportion in Africa.

Professional interests.—A group of day-school teachers would be specially interested in foreign educational problems; doctors in certain aspects of medical work; artisans in industrial work, &c. A compositor once printed one hundred copies of a summary of missionary facts discussed in a Circle and distributed them in his office. In another Circle a designer executed beautiful missionary designs.

Personal interests.—Many people have a personal interest in some country through a friend, or through having heard some missionary. Most men know some one who 'doesn't believe

in Missions,' to whom they may be induced to lend a book, or at least address some question.

Religious interests.—Even unconverted people are interested in the religious side of their own life. Such questions as, 'What features of Livingstone's life do you think worthy of imitation in your own?' or, 'Do you think it would be an advantage for Christians, like Moslems, to be forced to observe five times of prayer a day?' appeal to the religious interest.

There are many people who are real Christians, but who have little interest in Missions. If their sense of duty can be appealed to, and they can be shown that this new interest is a part of the Christian interest they already possess, then a very strong lever is to hand.

The Human Instincts.

The interests we have just been discussing are all acquired by experience and, as a consequence, vary with each individual.

But there are other impulses to action which are part of the common human endowment. These are the innate tendencies to react in certain specified ways under an external stimulus, known as instincts—such as fear, curiosity, &c. A study of these also will prove of great assistance to the leader. In the following pages no pretence will be made to scientific accuracy, and the word 'instinct' will be used with some freedom.

We have seen that the acquired interest possesses a certain power over its owner, acting as an impulse to action and directing the course of activity. Thus interest in a town where we have lived causes us to prick up our ears when it is mentioned in order to find out what is being said. A keener analysis shows that our interests are built up by experience upon a foundation of these primitive instincts, and that the instincts supply the impulsive force, whereas the experience guides and directs it. In the example quoted we may say that the instinct of curiosity prompts us to attend, but our previous experience directs that attention to the interesting object.

The value to the leader of a study of these instincts consists in the understanding it gives of how to draw forth an active response from the members, and so to interest them in the subject in hand and so in the whole missionary enterprise.

The leader who gets no response, and feels like one flogging a dead horse, should blame himself rather than the Circle. He must just believe that he has not yet struck the appropriate note to call out their response; and he must believe equally that every one *will* respond when once he has found the right stimulus to apply.

Curiosity.

The instinct of curiosity is universal and lies at the root of all learning. It leads to the activity of discovery in which it finds its satisfaction. Once aroused it creates a real eagerness to know. How can the leader bring it into play and direct its activity aright?

The typical ways to arouse curiosity are to ask questions, to suggest, to put forth part of an idea, to start on a train of thought but not to finish. Thus curiosity is stimulated if a map of Africa partly coloured green is displayed, and the leader says: 'This represents a certain date in the progress of Islam. Can you guess which?'

Curiosity is most easily drawn out along the lines of acquired interests. It will be much more alive concerning the subject of a book towards the close than at the beginning. It must, therefore, continually lead on from the old to the new by a system of connecting links.

Curiosity is excited by startling results, as paradoxical statements or anything that challenges the reason to find an explanation. Likewise any sudden feeling of ignorance or sense of a gap in one's knowledge will set it in action. Once aroused, it must be given full play. (See p. 11.)

Possession.

The instinct of possession or 'acquisitiveness,' the desire to get and to gather, and to find a particular pleasure in those magic words, 'my own,' is also universal.

This instinct is brought into play by letting each member have some special share in the work of the Circle, something which he can call his own. It may be to watch throughout the interests of one particular mission-field ('my own field'), or to prepare a special paper to read ('my own paper'), or to keep a minute book, or any similar task.

One special possession is very dear to every man—namely, his own opinions. The leader, who sympathetically cultivates a sense of their value and respects them, will find the member respond with a new feeling of responsibility for forming them aright. And what can aid the leader more ?

The same instinct finds vent in making collections of things. In some Circles the filling of a scrap-book with illustrations and extracts from magazines will be attractive. One man will find interest in the number of references he can find in newspapers ; another in keeping up his note-book of the proceedings ; another in the piling up of statistics ; and all find pleasure in drawing up any list and making it complete.

Constructiveness.

The constructive instinct impels man to make things and put them together. The child builds his house of bricks, the engineer puts together some new machine, and the business man evolves his schemes.

There is plenty of scope for this instinct in the Study Circle. One member will feel proud to help the leader plan his schemes ; others will have powers of imagination to construct imaginary letters or presentations ; others again will revel in making simple maps and diagrams.

Pugnacity.

The instinct of 'pugnacity' may not seem quite in place in missionary work ! But, in fact, it is one of the most powerful impulses towards its accomplishment. For the word is here used in that wide sense which includes all that impels men to overcome opposition, and lies at the root of the greatest human achievements. It is stronger with men than women, and differs much with individuals and races.

The strong climber always looks with greatest pleasure to the hardest mountain peak he has succeeded in mastering ; and likewise the best members always enjoy most the Assignments which tax their powers to the utmost, whilst leaving success in their hands.

Though this instinct is a bad master, it is a splendid servant. Where it is strong the member will respond to a challenging question, an exciting debate, or an uphill task.

Self-expression and Self-repression.

These instincts, sometimes called positive and negative self-feeling, are stimulated by different circumstances. We tend to assert ourselves in presence of those we regard as equal or inferior, and to be silent with our superiors.

When a member is conscious that he has something to contribute, as when he has thoroughly prepared an Assignment, the former comes into play. It is seen at work in the way men long to express their opinions when others are doing so, be the subject politics or Foreign Missions. It creates the desire to be understood, and the tendency to explanation if we are misunderstood. It is strong in the talkative member.

The instinct of self-repression is aroused by a sense of inferiority in some respect and tends to shyness. Shyness (see also pp. 77, 84) can only be overcome by bringing some other instinct into play, such as that of possession or self-assertion.

The Social Instinct.

A curious change comes over our feelings when we find ourselves acting, not alone, but as one of a crowd. It then becomes possible to do things which we could not do individually. How many of the spectators of a royal procession would shout and clap and be carried away with enthusiasm if alone ?

Once self-consciousness can be abolished and *esprit de corps* aroused (and this is much easier where there is equality in age and standing), this instinct will come into play. It may be made a motive for regular attendance, for joining in some co-operative effort, for taking part in the discussions, and generally for each one doing what others do. If the leader would foster it he must throw aside his own reserve and become one with the rest in their aims and enthusiasm. The captain who marches in step with his company may be their leader all the same, and indeed all the more, because of his closeness to them.

Play.

There are few problems more interesting than to work out the distinction between work and play. Most people regard

rowing as play, but to the boatman it is work. Again, it is not a mere matter of effort or interest, for some men put more of both into their games than into their business.

One of the elements in play is that of 'make-believe.' It is strong in young people and lasts well on into life. The make-believe committee, the impersonation, the imaginary situation, and all that has the savour of playing a game, has a peculiar charm for those who are not too old to enjoy them.

Another characteristic of play is that the activity is free and determined from within rather than from without. As the good cricket captain consults the members of his eleven as to their several places in the field, so the good leader will try to secure spontaneous action from his members. Happy is he if he can import that combination of light-hearted freedom with serious purpose which characterizes our English games. In getting a number of young men and girls, who are enthusiastic over games, to join a Study Circle, these analogies should be put forward. The combination required—each one playing his part; the definite aim in view; the sense of freedom and spontaneity; the need of all 'playing the game,' &c. Those in whom this instinct is strong may become as keen over the Study Circle as over their games, if once they recognize it as a form of play.

Other Instincts.

There are other innate tendencies, to which some would not give the name of instincts, but which are also motive forces to which an appeal can be made.

The spirit of emulation, which gives pleasure in excelling, is in its place a most valuable incentive to effort. It is the basis of all the competitive effort which is so great a factor both in business and athletics.

The tendency to imitate is another that by no means ceases with childhood. It helps others to follow a high standard if once it is set up.

The instinct of sympathy causes a response to any feeling which is vividly enough expressed or suggested.

The instinct of altruism leads men to sacrifice themselves for the protection or help of those who arouse it.

Systems of Interest.

One of the great contrasts between human and animal life, from the purely scientific view, is the thread of continuity which binds together the life of a man into a consistent whole made up of systems of interests and purposes. The animal reacts according to instinct to a series of detached impulses. But even the savage man, and still more the educated man, builds up systems of interest which direct and control his life and give it consistency and meaning. When we talk of creating missionary interest we mean therefore the process of building up such a system centring round missionary work.

A system of interest, like a river system, is made up of smaller systems, and these are fed by tiny rills and rivulets which combine and combine again to form the whole. So every controlling interest is built up. The personal interest in some friend who first gets keen on Missions and then goes out as a missionary may be one rivulet; a missionary book picked up perhaps in an idle moment may be another. The joining of a Study Circle is a whole system of its own, creating interest by causing and arousing now the instinct of curiosity, and now that of possession; now by forming connexions with outside systems of interest, and now by getting a purpose formed which will cause a further expenditure of energy.

In one sense it is all natural and subject to natural law. But equally it is all supernatural and subject to supernatural law. All the energies and impulses here described are the natural, fleshly, human endowment. They may be used in Satan's service as well as in the service of God. The duty, therefore, of the wise leader is like that of the missionary doctor, to yield himself up to the study of these natural forces and to see that they are yoked to the purposes of the Divine will. Every faculty of human nature must be brought into play, so that the mind of each child of God is interested in the interests of God's Kingdom.

Behind all, the only absolute source of power is the Holy Spirit. Whether working through these natural means, or by more direct control of the spirit of man, He alone is the true Physician both of the mind and of the body.

CHAPTER V

THE AIM AND PLAN OF THE MEETING

The Leader's Conditions.

In framing his plan for the study of each chapter, the leader must bear in mind the conditions which limit him, as well as the general aims expounded in previous chapters.

The *chapter* to be studied is his starting-point, for the whole plan must centre round this. An analysis of the chapter will reveal the leading ideas which the author had in mind, and the general outline of the information it contains.

The *membership of the Circle* is equally a condition to be studied. The leader's question must be, 'What is the message of the chapter for this particular Circle?' and widely different answers may be given in adapting the same chapter to different Circles. Problems of world politics may appeal to educated men, speculative questions to students, and more concrete and practical ones to others. A plan that would be spiritually helpful to one group might frighten another group away. The plan must be like a suit of clothes made to order; it must be made out of the material the chapter provides, but closely fitted to the measure of the individual Circle.

The *leader's personality* is another condition. It is not every leader who could carry out the programme of an American friend who made all his members begin by sitting on the floor, grinding Japanese ink and drawing extempore maps of Japan! The leader must adopt only such plans as he feels he can carry through with enthusiasm.

The *length of the meeting* is a condition of importance, and

along with this the rate at which the Circle can work. No mistake is commoner with inexperienced leaders than that of trying to cram into an hour just twice as much as the Circle can do efficiently.

The Framework of the Plan.

The published Suggestions to Leaders * will be found to contain for each meeting a specific 'Aim,' 'Assignments,' or preparation, which the members are expected to make beforehand, and supplementary 'Questions' which the leader may ask during the meeting itself.

The consideration of the 'Questions' and 'Assignments' will form the topic of the next chapter. It may be noted here, however, that whereas in England the word 'Assignment' is used of each specific problem or piece of preparation forming a part of the whole, it is used in America collectively to denote the whole preparation, and also to denote the act of assigning or laying this plan before the members at the previous meeting.

The word 'Aim' is also used here in a special sense. In some publications the word 'problem' or 'study problem' is used, whereas the word 'Aim' is confined to the purpose in the mind of the leader. It is hoped that a careful study of this chapter will justify the preference here shown for the word 'Aim' to denote the general objective and purpose of the individual meeting.

The Function of the Aim.

The function of the Aim is (1) directive, and (2) attractive.

It enables the leader to select from the whole available material that which is most valuable for his members, and to direct their attention specially to some problem or subject connected with it.

The complaint is often heard that there is too much material in each chapter of a text-book. But we have to read much in order to remember a little; and this extra reading is not wasted, but it all goes to modify our ideas and to colour the general background into which our more definite

* *Suggestions to Leaders* are published by the C.M.S. in connexion with every text-book.

judgments are set. The effect of a definite Aim is to concentrate attention upon the particular aspect of the chapter which is most worth remembering and most likely to be helpful to the members.

The Aim has also an attractive value. It sets before the Circle some problem to solve, or some purpose to accomplish. It represents something they will want to attain, and so arouses purpose.

An excursion party which set out with no particular destination in view would not go very fast or very far. But if they set out to reach some famous view-point they would have something not only to direct, but also to stimulate their efforts. Likewise an attractive aim provides the members with a definite goal which they may set out towards and look forward to attain.

Selection of Aims.

1. The Aim should be *closely related to the chapter*, and if the text-book is well written should keep in view the author's aim in writing the chapter.

Only a portion of the chapter need be utilized, provided always there is sufficient fact material for the aim selected.

The Aim should carry the members further than the chapter, but only so much further as reflection upon its contents may naturally carry them. For example, the Aim upon a chapter describing the world's unrest might legitimately be, 'To gather the spiritual lessons of the present unrest.'

The temptation to adopt an Aim which might be attained without reading the chapter must be resisted. Both reading and reflection should be necessitated.

2. The Aim should be *adapted to the members*. The total available material consists not only of the chapter, but of their own experience, the Bible and such extra reading as may be feasible. The more the discussion can be related to the range of interests of the members (see Chapter IV.) the better, and the Aim must be chosen with this in view. The extent of their missionary interest, &c., must be taken into account.

The leader may well ask himself, 'What convictions of value will this Aim assist in producing? What lessons would Christ have this Circle learn from this chapter?'

3. The Aim should create *the greatest ultimate interest.* The Aims, like the chapters, form a series and must be considered as a whole. Their sequence must be considered, and subjects should not be treated at any stage which can better be referred to another. The Aims given in the *Suggestions to Leaders* should be a useful guide.

4. The Aim should be *attractive* both in subject and in expression. This will depend upon its appeal to the interests and instincts referred to in Chapter IV.

5. The Aim must be *clear.* It must be free from any lurking ambiguity; for nothing is more distracting than to find out too late that different meanings have been attached to it.

6. The Aim should be *attainable,* i.e. it should offer the members a task which they can expect to accomplish. For this purpose it should contain a problem, rather than an answer to a problem. This problem, or task, must not be too vague or general. Thus, for a chapter upon the results of mission work in Africa, the Aim, 'To learn the lessons of missionary work in Africa,' would be too vast and bewildering; whereas 'To see what are the results of mission-work in Africa' would only raise a question already answered in the chapter itself. A better Aim would be, 'From actual results, to realize the possibilities of Christianity in Africa.'

Spiritual Aspect of the Aim.

Most important of all in selecting Aims is the question of the spiritual opportunity likely to be provided by the consequent preparation and discussion. It is evident that some Aims direct attention more to the spiritual side of things than others. For example, in a chapter on the life of Mohammed, the Aim, 'To consider Mohammed's claim as a political reformer,' would give less scope for spiritual influence than the Aim, 'To consider Mohammed's claim to supersede the Christian revelation.'

In seeking to develop the spiritual side, the leader must keep before himself the members, their stage of experience, their readiness to express themselves before others, &c., and not plunge them into such a discussion immaturely. But there may come a time when one or more of them ought to be

facing the missionary call, or to be seeking more definitely the fullness of the Spirit; and he may feel these needs equally himself. He should then select his Aim and Assignments with this in view.

The mere selection or acceptance of an Aim will not of itself produce spiritual results. But it may guide the mind to spiritual questions, and open a door for the expression of feeling, which may then be evoked in response to the earnest prayer and personal influence of the leader.

The Aim and the Members.

It is evident that if the Aim is to incite the will, as well as guide the thought, of the members, it must be accepted and appropriated by them as their own Aim as well as that of the leader. When this is the case, the members will resemble a pack of hounds which are kept together and incited to pursuit because they see and scent the fox in front of them. But if the leader alone really possesses the Aim they will be like the same pack deprived of sight and scent, held by a leash and driven along by the leader in obedience to his will, with no natural impulse from within.

At first sight it might seem to require almost a prophetic foresight on the leader's part to be able to hit upon an Aim which is certain to become a real purpose in the minds of others. But in reality it is not so difficult. In normal circumstances, at least after the first few meetings, an interest in the book, and an *esprit de corps* is aroused which puts the members into a highly 'suggestible' frame of mind, and makes them inclined to respond actively to any Aim suggested. Moreover, the leader soon gets to know the Circle well enough to see how to adapt the Aims given in the printed suggestions to their wishes, and he will find that he has only to suggest the Aim for the next meeting, tactfully, for it to be taken up with enthusiasm.

The Aim and the Leader.

It is just as important that the Aim should be really that of the leader, or else he will soon find a divergency of thought arising. A true leader is one who goes with his regiment or party, but ever keeps one step ahead of them. Should he

instruct them to proceed in one direction and himself proceed in another, confusion will arise and confidence be lost.

The leader is specially liable to one particular form of this mistake. The Aim frequently takes the form of a problem capable of more than one solution, and the leader is tempted to make it his aim to press on them one particular solution which commends itself to him. For instance, suppose the Aim selected to be 'To discover the causes of the rapid spread of Islam,' and that the leader, feeling that the chief cause is the slackness of the Early Church, really aims at proving this rather than at conducting the inquiry he has set before the others. In this case, if the leader persists, he is depriving the Circle both of the direction and incitement with which the Aim announced had provided them, and he is driving them blindly upon an arbitrary and predetermined path of his own. Such a proceeding produces an uneasy feeling of wonder as to what the leader is driving at, and perhaps the question is asked, 'Is that what you wanted me to say?' No surer sign could be given that the interest has passed away from the problem itself, and has been directed to guessing what is in the leader's mind.

Other Aims of the Leader.

It is necessary now to make clear that the word 'Aim,' as denoting the expressed aim of the meeting is used in a special and technical way. When we say that the 'Aim' must be the aim of the leader, we mean that he must, like the others, make it a real object which he tries to attain; but we do not thereby exclude him from having many other aims and purposes.

He must indeed have many other aims—such as, for example, to conclude the meeting punctually, to call forth the prayers of the members, to create a good discussion, to cause some shy member to talk, &c. So long as these other Aims do not conflict with his pursuance of the expressed Aim of the meeting, they are entirely in place.

Indeed, it is a most desirable thing that the leader should have these aims as definite as possible, so that he may consciously pursue them. He should go so far as to write down on paper the exact results which he hopes to achieve from the

meeting both for individuals, and for the Circle at large. If these are properly related they may all be pursued together without any lack of unity in the discussion.

Here is a sample list. (1) Expressed Aim, 'to see whether Mohammed was fit to found a universal religion'; (2) to lead to an examination of Mohammed's character and produce a sense of contrast with that of Christ; (3) to get A to express his opinions freely; (4) to stir up B so that he will be willing to prepare a special Assignment next time; (5) to encourage C who was rather snubbed last time; (6) to deepen general interest in view of a closer grappling with spiritual problems next time.

Such aims harmonize and do not conflict. It is as if an archer aimed at (1) hitting the bull's-eye, (2) getting the prize, and (3) beating his competitor. Provided he does not aim at two targets, i.e. provided these other aims are of a different character, and do not conflict with that which directs his firing, there is no conflict in having more aims than one.

Secret Aims.

It will be observed that some of these aims (in the wider sense of the word) cannot be expressed publicly, and especially those which relate to individuals, without defeating their own object. We cannot announce our intention of getting A to open his mouth!

Nevertheless, even with such aims any lack of proper candour is to be deprecated. Good leading does not consist in elaborate guile, but in helping others to attain their best self-development. There is no reason why members should not know that it is the leader's earnest desire to help them; and, provided he is humble-minded and does not try to force them into a mould, they will respect him all the more for being candid.

Tact and wisdom must of course be exercised, but in all things the more natural, spontaneous, and open the leader can be, the better.

General Plan.

The Aim, Assignments, Questions, and other preparation, after being rough cast, need fitting together into a harmonious whole. They should be scrutinized carefully from the following points of view.

1. *Time.*—Many admirable programmes are spoiled by being too long for the time. The leader then either rushes the Circle, or has to omit the latter and generally more important part of the work.

It is generally advisable, in revision, to omit rather than condense. Indeed, some Assignments are like india-rubber; and when the leader thinks he can condense them and keep them down, they expand again in the discussion by the force of their own elasticity.

When the chief purpose of an Assignment is the preparation it requires, discussion upon it may be shortened by preparing no questions upon it, but just receiving the prepared answers.

It is always worth the leader's while to put on his notes the time which he expects each Assignment or part of the programme to occupy. He need not keep rigidly to these, but they are a useful guide both in keeping to time, and in knowing how long a programme to arrange.

2. *The Member's View-point* (see Chapter II.).—Let the leader revise each step in his rough programme from the member's view-point. Will he like the Aim? Which Assignment will interest him most, &c.?

Further, he must inquire how far such a programme will be self-propelling. If he merely opens the Assignment and says no more, how long will the discussion last, and what line will it take.

3. *Cohesion.*—The plan should be such that one Assignment and Question dovetails into another, and that they are not merely a collection of unrelated parts. But it must not be so detailed and fixed as to interfere with the free investigation of the members.

The ideal plan is one which has its main features clear and strong, so that it can be easily grasped by the members; with plenty of detailed information and questions prepared by the leader, for use if necessary, to stimulate further discussion. This reserve of detail will as a rule be only partially required, and what part proves useful will depend upon the line the members take. But the more the leader prepares, the better.

4. *General Impression.*—The leader should write down carefully what general impression he intends to produce, and

all the aims (see p. 48) he has in view, and ask: Whether this programme is calculated to produce them? To what interest or impulse will it appeal? What convictions will it form or strengthen? What will it effect?

Leader's Preparation.

The following items will constitute a thorough preparation on the leader's part, though not necessarily in this order.

1. Read the whole book beforehand and glance through the *Suggestions to Leaders* to get an idea of the general plan.

2. Analyse the chapter, and grasp its main lessons and place in the whole course.

3. Select Aim and Assignments; modify them or make new ones to suit the Circle.

4. Analyse Assignments and prepare supplementary information, questions, &c., for working them out in the meeting.

5. Revise the scheme as a whole.

6. Taking the programme as an ordinary member, prepare individual answers to the Assignments.

The *spiritual preparation* cannot be separated from the former altogether, for prayer and the upward look for guidance should accompany every step from first to last. When the plan is complete there remains the prayer to be made for each member, and for the realization of each aim in view. Only the Holy Spirit's power working in and through all can produce change in heart and life, which is the ultimate aim of all spiritual work.

The time needed for preparation varies enormously. Where the leader is a busy and capable person, and makes all possible preparation in advance, one or two hours will suffice, and good work can be done in these conditions. In other cases five or six hours may be profitably spent.

CHAPTER VI

ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS

The Importance of Assignments.

In conferences of leaders of Study Circles two of the commonest questions are, 'How can I get my members to talk?' and, 'How can I get my members to prepare?' The two questions are closely linked together, and the secret of success lies more than anywhere in the choice of suitable Assignments.

Every leader knows how often an Assignment to which he looked forward has fizzled out because no one had prepared it (of course they had 'no time'), and has also had experiences of Assignments that have 'caught on' and led to vigorous preparation and discussion, with permanent results. How can we eliminate the former and multiply the latter?

The Assignment as Sub-aim.

Let us first ask, What is the proper function of an Assignment?

From one point of view we may regard the Assignment as a sub-aim. Just as the Aim prescribes the objective of the whole meeting and stimulates to its attainment, so the Assignment provides an objective and stimulus for a portion of the programme. The Aim is too large and general to be a sufficient guide, and so the journey is divided up into stages, each represented by an Assignment. The Aim may, therefore, be described as the destination of the journey, and the Assignments as the streets, leading one into another, and ultimately leading to the destination.

The Assignment, however, differs essentially from the Aim in that it not only prescribes an aim, but also to some extent the mode of reaching it, whether by debate, impersonation, &c. For this reason and others it should possess even greater attractive and stimulating power than the Aim.

The Assignments [redacted] the Preparation Required.

From a slightly different point of view the Assignments may be regarded as securing the previous personal preparation required in order that the Aim of the meeting may be successfully attained.

The mere reading of the chapter with the Aim in view is not in itself an adequate preparation. Not only does the leader need to have a plan for the discussion, but the minds of the members need to have the outline of this plan before them in advance, that they may do independent thinking upon it. The Assignments provide the opportunity for each member to prepare, and yet for all to prepare along certain definite lines.

Special Purposes of Assignments.

The Assignment being only a portion of the whole unit represented by each meeting may subserve some more limited and special purpose.

Some Assignments aim at extending the width of knowledge. One of the chief necessities for missionary workers who have never seen the foreign field is to have a clear mental picture of the facts. Assignments leading to a close study of the pictorial illustrations, the verbal descriptions, anecdotes of fact, maps, &c., all serve this end. Such an Assignment as, ‘ Which of these anecdotes is most striking ? ’ will have as its end not a decision as to the relative merits of the stories, but a closer attention to some of them, with a desire to give a clearer mental picture of the facts.

Some Assignments will aim at deepening the understanding of certain problems. Here the facts are subsidiary to the conclusions concerning them. Such Assignments go straight for the formation of convictions. They involve comparison of facts, but with a view to some generalization. The questions which have to be thought out are too many to be

threshed out in the meeting on the spur of the moment and therefore an Assignment requiring previous thought and reflection is given to pave the way. Such a question as, 'Mention three characteristic needs of African religious life, and point out how Christianity meets them,' would pave the way for the conviction that Christ can meet the whole need of Africa.

Some Assignments have as their end the application of knowledge already attained either for practical purposes, or for further study. Thus Bible truths may be applied to modern missionary conditions, common objections to Missions answered, or even useful points selected for Sunday-school teaching. Assignments may be given with the purpose of stirring certain emotions, such as pity for the condition of the Heathen, or the emulation of some missionary hero. They may specially be such as the leader thinks will react upon the life of an individual. One missionary now in the field made his decision after being made to write a brief paper upon 'The Evangelization of the World in this Generation.' In short, whatever purpose the leader has in view, which is capable of accomplishment through the individual preparation of the members, can be aimed at in an Assignment specially adapted for this purpose.

Qualities of Good Assignments.

Since the Assignment may be regarded as a sub-aim, all that was said about the Aim on pp. 48–50 applies to it also.

Since each Assignment is part of a larger whole we may consider first the Assignments collectively in their relationship to each other, and to the rest of the course. We shall next consider them in relation to the members, and then in themselves as regards their value and the form in which they are cast.

The Assignments as a Whole.

The whole set of Assignments for a meeting should be so related to the Aim that (*a*) they constitute the preparation necessary to achieve a good discussion, and that (*b*) the discussion of them will actually achieve the aim in view. The first quality of a good Assignment is that it should be *pertinent to the Aim.*

Like the Aim of the meeting, they must bear upon the material in the chapter. Whatever part of the chapter is really relevant to the subject indicated in the Aim (and this will not mean all the contents of the chapter), should be roughly covered and brought under discussion in the Assignments as a whole. Some Assignments may quite properly need no direct reference to the chapter (e.g., certain Bible Assignments, or reviews of previous chapters); but as a whole they should arise out of that part of it which the Aim brings under discussion.

They may be such that each Assignment covers the whole of this material in different aspects, or that each takes up a separate section.

The Assignments should also, as a rule, include reference to the Bible and personal experience.

They should be varied in character so as to avoid monotony. They should also be placed in the right logical order so that the discussion of each one follows naturally upon that of the previous one, and that the issue of the whole is the accomplishment of the Aim.

The more transparent is the relationship of the Assignments to each other and to the Aim, the better. Then the members can have a clear and realizable purpose presented to them, and can see at once that the preparation and discussion of the Assignments will accomplish this purpose. Nothing will make them work so much as this.

The Assignment and the Members.

The effectiveness of an Assignment is much more dependent on those who use it than that of the Aim, just because it is capable of a closer adaptation to individual needs. Take as examples: (1) 'Prepare to conduct an Indian student round Cambridge and show him the effects of Christianity upon our life and institutions,' and (2) 'Compare the present unrest in India with the Renaissance in Europe.' The first of these is only available for those familiar with Cambridge, and the second for those familiar with English history. It is of the first importance that every Assignment should be closely *related to the circle of interests* of the members, and should not assume or depend on

knowledge which they do not possess. Most leaders overestimate the knowledge and underestimate the ability of their members.

Likewise each Assignment should be scrutinized by means of the list of instincts and interests in Chapter IV., to see where the steam is coming from to make it work.

A debate may work well with a Circle of young men, that would absolutely fail in one of older ladies. Impersonations, and 'play' Assignments only work well in certain Circles, generally of young people, and so on.

Other things being equal, the more difficult the Assignment (up to a certain limit, see p. 42), the more interesting it proves. Let the leader test that by asking for a list of (*a*) the most difficult, (*b*) the most interesting, Assignments. He will find many in both lists.

Assignments should generally involve an element of choice, or a call for self-expression in some form or other (see pp. 23, 43, 69), so that each member may feel them worth doing.

Assignments and their Value.

The leader should regard the selection of Assignments as a great and responsible opportunity, and test each according to its ultimate spiritual value. A pointless Assignment should be rejected, for he has no right to waste the time of other people.

Assignments which involve fundamental principles, which lead to spiritual discoveries, which cause deep heart-searching, and which lead to missionary decisions, should be carefully prepared and introduced. They will be those most appreciated afterwards.

Of course, a set of Assignments cannot all be strong meat. Lighter food and condiments must be mixed in; but the meat must not be omitted or the meal will prove unsatisfying.

The practical value of the Assignments whether bringing out useful lessons, or in deepening character, or in forming and defining convictions, or perhaps in equipping for the actual work of controversy or teaching, should always be a chief factor in their selection,

The Form of Assignments.

The Assignment needs to be just as unambiguous as the Aim (see p. 49), but it is less important that it should be concise. It should also be as definite as possible in its scope and wording, making it quite clear what is expected of the members.

Generally speaking, the more concrete the form in which the Assignment can be presented the better. Thus instead of asking, 'What reasons for missionary service does this chapter supply?' a better form would be, 'Write a letter to a keen young curate persuading him, on the basis of this chapter, to offer to the C.M.S.'

Sometimes the form of an Assignment may be such as to suggest questions of wider interest, and to inspire wider reading. Where this can be done without interference with its immediate purpose, it is evidently desirable.

The Working out of the Assignment.

The Assignment should be criticized by means of the question, 'How will it work out in discussion?'

An Assignment may prove so interesting in preparation that every member will bring a mass of material which would require the whole hour to compare. If this is not utilized there will be a set-back of interest. Or the contrary may be the case: it may be interesting to prepare, but not provide much material for discussion, as is the case with maps.

Again it is important that the Assignments should possess not only a logical sequence, but be such as to reach a climax towards the close. Those involving more purely intellectual issues may come first, those leading up to a devotional climax should come near the close. The leader must ask himself, What will be the feeling of the Circle as they come to the end of Assignment 2? Will it be a good preparation and put them in the right spirit for Assignment 3? Where in the programme will prayer come most naturally?

Remembering (see Chapter II.) that what really matters is the member's experience: both in and out of the Circle, he will try to work out what will be the probable experience of the member in the preparation and in the discussion, and so

choose his Assignments as to provide him with the greatest opportunity for spiritual advancement.

Special Types of Assignments.

1. *Individual Assignments.*—As a rule, each Assignment should be prepared by all the members. Only united preparation can secure united discussion.

Nevertheless, the individual Assignment has a real value, which should not be neglected. By its nature it brings into play the instinct of possession (see p. 41) and calls forth a high degree of interest in the one who prepares it. It may also lay under contribution powers (e.g., of map-drawing) possessed by individual members. It is particularly useful where outside reading or information is needed.

2. *Maps and Diagrams.*—A thorough acquaintance with missionary problems is impossible apart from map-study; but this can be introduced in many ways apart from being the subject of single Assignments. The artistic powers of any individual may be exercised in making maps for the benefit of all; but such maps must not merely be displayed (much less passed round!), but must be made the subject of frequent appeal.

As an example: suppose a map be prepared showing by means of a prominent green line the limits of the spread of Islam one hundred years after its foundation; and by a thin line almost invisible, its limits at the present day. The leader might hang up the map and ask, 'What do you think this represents?' When he receives the appropriate answer, he appoints a member with a brush dipped in ink to mark in the limits at the present time, asking the Circle to direct him what countries and districts to include, and letting this member correct them when they go wrong.

Maps are more effective when each member can be induced to draw, from memory, or at home, a series of sketch-maps illustrating various features; or to fill in a series of cheap outline maps in the same way.

It may be worth adding in regard to diagrams that they are useful in proportion as they set forth some fact in a very clear and striking fashion. If too complicated they lose their value.

3. *Paper.*—In addition to the value attaching to all individual Assignments (see above), a paper is specially useful when it is desired to gather into a short space material which might otherwise become diffuse and take too much time. The talkative member may well be asked to bring his contribution in a brief, written form. A paper is also useful for the presentation of material gathered from outside reading. The facts are then present ready for reference.

Moreover, in certain Circles, early in the course, there is often difficulty in opening up a discussion. A brief paper, followed by questions, forms in such cases an easy introduction. It is a safe general rule to limit papers to about three minutes, or what comes to the same thing, five hundred words.

4. *Distributive Assignments.*—Sometimes it is possible to divide an Assignment up into distributive parts, e.g., if various members (or groups of members) represent Native Christians from different fields appealing for missionaries. This form of Assignment is a very useful variation.

In some courses, where the field covered is wide and varied (e.g., Islam) it is a good thing to assign to each member a special portion of that field whose interests he is supposed to watch with special care throughout the course.

5. *Impersonations.*—Impersonations, like other 'play' Assignments, appeal more to the young and imaginative than to the old and utilitarian. They are perhaps more effective in producing a lively discussion than in securing thorough preparation.

The fundamental law that more impression is made by what we say than by what we hear, must here be recollected. Repeated experience shows over and over again that people get keener upon the position they defend. Thus the impersonation of a sceptic should never be put in the hands of one who has any tendency to scepticism, but rather given to the most convinced. The members of the Circle should be made to argue in the direction in which it is intended to lead them.

Sometimes, however, the reverse is the case. Where the impersonator is a particularly strong advocate, and is held in respect by the rest, he may swing them over to his side.

This constitutes a danger to be watched against; and if it should happen, the leader should then ask the impersonator to cease his impersonation and argue against his previously assumed position.

Another difficulty in an impersonation is that, once entered upon, it to some extent takes the meeting out of the leader's hands. The only way the leader can interfere is by breaking through and destroying the pretence. It should always be made clear whether the impersonator is giving his own or assumed views.

Impersonations are, of course, mere devices to secure freer discussion; and it is not absolutely necessary that they should be very accurate representations.

6. *Criticisms.*—A useful type of Assignment is to set forth a sentence involving a judgment and ask the members to criticize it, e.g., 'Denominational rivalry has done more harm to Missions than the indifference of the Home Church.' Such criticism involves a discussion of the facts, the extent to which the judgment is true or false, and how any existing evils may be remedied.

7. *Debates.*—Debates, like impersonations, are more useful in producing a lively discussion than thorough preparation. Topics selected for debates should be such as to divide the opinions of the members as evenly as possible. They should, moreover, be such that in order to support either side efficiently a good knowledge of the facts is required. For example, a debate upon the topic, 'Is Christianity more genuine in England or in Uganda?' would secure an efficient rehearsal of the qualities and condition of the Native Christians in Uganda. Since the effect of a debate is seldom to come to a unanimous conclusion, debates should never be promoted upon any topic on which it is desirable that all should agree, e.g., it would be unwise to debate whether Islam or Christianity were the better religion. Generally, the use of a debate is to open out a two-sided question and show the amount of truth on each side.

8. *Scripture Assignments.*—The Scripture Assignment should not be regarded as a perfunctory method of dragging in the Bible somehow. The function of the Bible Assignment is twofold.

(*a*) Whatever topic is worth discussion in a missionary Study Circle will find some light cast upon it from the Scriptures. We need the light cast from the inspired pages; the Bible is our guide-book and manual in all spiritual questions.

(*b*) The Scripture Assignment is a convenient method of leading the discussion up to the spiritual issues involved.

Like other Assignments it must be pertinent to the Aim, and arise naturally out of the main discussion. It should ideally be such that, if omitted, a gap would be noticed. When this is so it will be found (as in all true illustrations) that not only does the Bible throw light on the missionary problems, but that they likewise throw light upon the Bible, and that each helps to a better understanding of the other. Indeed, they were made for each other.

Reviews.

It is useful to open the meeting with a review of the previous study. This fixes what has already been learned and forms a good connecting link.

The review may be presented verbally by the leader, or may consist in written minutes made by one member, or by various members in turn, or it may be elicited at the time by questions from the leader. The last method takes longest, but is most effectual where it is important to have the subject of the previous meeting well in mind.

Written minutes are always useful, and may be combined with the last method.

Questions.

In order to produce the best discussion the leader must try to forecast somewhat the line it is likely to take, and be prepared with questions in order to stimulate it and help it out where necessary.

Questions should not be asked for testing purposes. The leader is not a schoolmaster, and for him to assume the right to examine them and administer praise and blame may be offensive.

The purpose of these questions is to suggest lines of thought to the members, which will help to work out the Assignments

and reach the Aim before them. The question is, therefore, a sort of sub-assignment, but supplied on the spur of the moment and therefore unprepared on the member's part.

Therefore, much that has been said about Assignments applies to questions. They should be unambiguous, varied, pertinent, arising naturally out of the discussion, in their proper place, and possessed of a real spiritual value (see pp. 55–60).

The Preparation of Questions.

Since it is essential to the unity of the discussion that the questions should arise naturally, it is evident that the leader must prepare far more questions than he expects to use. He will do his best to have an intelligent anticipation of its probable course, but will also have alternatives ready.

For example, if the Assignment be 'Was Mohammed a prophet or a self-deluded enthusiast?' he may expect a vigorous discussion upon the word 'prophet,' and prepare such questions as 'How should we define a prophet?' 'How is the word used in the New Testament?' 'Do you approve of Carlyle's definition of a prophet?' &c. But the discussion may go off upon a different line altogether and turn upon Mohammed's sincerity. In such a contingency he would need such questions as: 'What is there to show that Mohammed was insincere in his later days?' 'If you had been living then, what might have shaken your faith in his sincerity?' &c.

The advantage of preparing questions beforehand is manifold. It helps the leader to analyse and think out all possible ramifications of the Assignment. It also is invaluable as a preparation in the art of asking good, suggestive questions spontaneously, which should be the summit of his ambition.

How Not to Ask Questions.

It follows that questions must not be fired off just because the leader has prepared them; still less is it permissible to read them off from a list.

Strings of questions, such as may be rightly used in a Sunday school, where short steps are necessary,* are out of

* See Adams's *Primer on Teaching*, chap. vi.

place in an adult Circle. The use of such a string depends entirely upon the right answers being given to each, and this means that only one answer is possible, so rendering the member a mere follower of the leader's ideas, and not really getting him to express his own.

Thus, suppose a leader should prepare for the following questions and answers :—

Q. 1.—Did Mohammed propound new truths ?

A. 1.—Yes ; the unity of God and other things.

Q. 2.—What do we call a man who propounds new truths ?

A. 2.—A prophet.

Q. 3.—Then was Mohammed a prophet ?

In even a short series as this, the second question is rendered impossible, if the first answer is 'No.' A leader who had set his mind on asking these questions would probably begin to argue with his Circle if they said 'No' to the first question ; and if they allowed him to get on to the second question and then replied, 'A teacher,' he would have to fish round till he got hold of the word 'prophet' before he could proceed again.

Where, as with children, the teacher has the right to expound a truth, leading their minds to follow his in a defined track, such question-strings may be used (with care) ; but in the adult Circle they are foredoomed to failure.

Ramifying Questions.

A question which is capable of an immediate answer, which closes up the subject and leaves no more to be said, is like a blind alley, leading nowhere. Such a question as 'What is the date of Mohammed's birth ?' brings the answer A.D. 570, and then silence. Such questions are to be avoided.

The best type of questions are those which provoke thought and discussion, are capable of more than one answer, each answer starting new trains of thought and opening fresh avenues for discussion. They are like a road which ramifies continually into other roads and by-paths, and so opens up a large district for exploration.

It has been said that good questions generally contain the words why, how, which, or some other of this series ; for

such questions cannot be answered in a word, and are apt to provoke deeper thought.

Further Qualities of Good Questions.

Questions should be definite and not too vague. A leader once asked, 'Can anyone say anything else about Turkey ?' and all were silent. The choice of things to say was too bewildering ; there was not sufficient guidance as to what was expected.

Leading questions are to be avoided. When a leader once asked, 'Don't you think that greed was the cause of their downfall ?' he was rather making a statement than asking a question. A good question is one the purport of which is quite clear, but which leaves something to the knowledge and personal opinion and thought of the member, so that in answering it he finds scope for reflection and self-expression.

Questions on matters of fact are only to be asked when it is certain either that the member can answer, or if not, will not mind displaying his ignorance.

Any questions giving scope for different answers are good. Such are questions involving a choice of different alternatives or making appeal to diverse experiences, e.g., 'What objections to Missions do you hear most frequently ?'

Questions involving deep personal feelings are better raised indirectly. Instead of asking 'What is keeping *you* from the mission-field ?' it is better to ask 'What reasons chiefly keep people from the mission-field ?' and leave those to express their own feelings who are willing to do so.

Questions requiring criticism of certain statements, or sharply dividing opinion (see p. 71) are frequently useful.

How to Make Use of this Chapter.

It is impossible to remember, far less to follow all the foregoing rules in making out a programme. But by using them as a guide for continual practice and self-criticism he will find that his programmes are growing more and more interesting and successful, and that he is becoming a better leader both in theory and in practice.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

Introduction.

From the member's point of view the meeting itself is the outward expression and the culmination of his preparation on the given chapter. It is his opportunity to draw the threads together and reach definite conclusions. At its close he looks forward to the united prayer, and to receiving the new Assignments.

In securing a good meeting we have already seen how much depends upon the programme and preparation of the leader. But good chairmanship at the time is equally necessary. A good leader will get a vigorous discussion, clear conclusions, and an enthusiastic finish, where a bad one with the same programme will produce nothing but dullness and distraction.

How, then, can the leader make the most of his opportunity in the meeting itself? The detailed work of leading will be dealt with in this chapter: how to open, to stimulate discussion, and to reach conclusions. How to produce a right atmosphere will form the subject of the succeeding chapter.

Importance of Assigning.

The inexperienced leader merely dictates the Aim and Assignments at the close of the meeting, or even gives out printed slips. But with experience he learns to take more care about this than about any part of his preparations.

For this is the absolutely vital point of contact between the leader and the Circle. It is the occasion when he makes sure that their minds are conformed to his as to the Aim of the

meeting, and the method by which it is to be attained ; and this is no easy task.

Failure in this is responsible for half the leader's troubles. Does he find the discussion rambling and discursive, with no apparent desire to get anywhere ? It is because they have paid little attention to the Aim and are possessed of no real desire to reach it. Does he find the Circle flat, giving short answers to his questions, or none, and evidently waiting to be pushed along like carriages ? It is because they have no plan of their own to work at, and wait upon the leader step by step. Do they seem at sea, or even begin to ask ' What are we discussing ? ' It is because they have not understood and assimilated the leader's plan.

Giving out Assignments.

In giving out the Aim and Assignments it is well to begin by stating the topic of the next chapter and showing its connexion with the previous one. The leader then requires that his scheme of Aim and Assignments should be (1) declared and discussed, (2) fully understood, and (3) really taken up heartily by the members.

To secure the first two of these he should explain why and how the Assignments help the Aim ; or, better still, if he can, get the members to explain this to him. He should ask how they understand them, and perhaps give hints as to their preparation. The more they talk about them, the more their interest grows.

He should try to incite and stimulate these instincts upon which he is relying for their appeal, their curiosity, &c. In announcing a debate he must stir the first feelings of opposition and so on (see Chap. IV.).

He may also try to elicit the value of the subject to be prepared. A leader, preliminary to assigning work on Mohammed's life, asked the question, ' Which is most worth a holiday given to its study, the life of Napoleon or the life of Mohammed ? '

Opening the Meeting.

At the opening of the meeting, after prayer, the leader should again make sure that the Aim is really before the minds

of the members as a thing to be accomplished. He should also announce the outline of his plan, and secure their agreement to it. Should they violently oppose any part of it, he must either persuade them, or give way. If secret opposition remains, it may wreck his plan. In the same way, regarding each Assignment, he should (in part at least) announce how he intends to treat it. For example, if the Assignment were 'Which nation in Asia is most disturbed at present?' he might say: 'We will first have a bare vote, without giving reasons; then selecting the two nations with most votes, we will take sides on them for a debate; and then hear what is to be said on the other countries.' If any reasonable amendment to this plan were pressed, he might adopt it.

Opening an Assignment.

The ideal Assignment will bring the members to the meeting with well-prepared answers, and anxious to let off steam; therefore the leader must provide for them the earliest opportunity of doing so. A long introduction only irritates them, and their minds being full of their own answers they do not listen. Once they have delivered themselves of what they have prepared, and have compared and discussed their replies, then, and not till then, the leader may be prepared to carry the discussion further.

In opening an Assignment it is well to stick to the very words of the Assignment. The members have studied and got used to this form of words, and a sudden change is apt to knock them off their pedestal.

If members are slow to discuss, an Assignment may be opened up either: (1) by a short paper (three minutes), the members being told beforehand to ask questions upon it; (2) by asking one member specially to open it; (3) by stating two sides of a case for argument and then making them take sides; or (4) by asking round some easy question involving a matter of opinion. Such props to discussion should in time become unnecessary.

Developing a Discussion.

The leader should be constantly upon the watch during ordinary conversation to see how discussions spring up, and

under what conditions. A group of men will discuss vigorously on politics, or the events recorded in the daily papers; ladies discuss local gossip, household affairs, and occasionally dress. Wherever there is discussion it will be observed that there is a common basis of fact (though each has his own quota to add), and scope for difference of opinion.

Facts without opinions are dull; and opinions apart from facts are futile; it is the combination that is interesting and useful.

Difference of opinion is often the most effective way of eliciting the facts, for people need facts behind them.

Divergent Opinions.

The leader will deliberately prepare Assignments or questions with a view to dividing opinion, and promoting discussion. He will also be on the look out for them as they arise, and enliven the proceedings with a miniature debate. Sometimes he can produce the same effect by cheerily asserting a strong personal opinion himself, so as to arouse opposition. If he finds the Circle all settling down to one opinion, he may wake them up with a sharp challenge, making the best case he can for the other side.

It is not necessary to settle these differences of opinion, especially upon unimportant points. When they have elicited the discussion and the facts required, they may be left unsettled, or dismissed after a vote. Such a question as 'Does Japan or China need missionaries more urgently?' might be asked simply to point the urgent need of each, and once these have been discussed the question may be left.

The leader should treat himself in such discussions as one of the Circle, giving his opinion, but not asserting it with authority.

The Acquisition of Facts.

Though differences of opinion and discussion of them produce liveliness of debate, yet the importance of learning facts must not be forgotten. Not only are they vital to extend our knowledge (see p. 56) and as a firm foundation for convictions (see pp. 25–29), but they add interest to the discussion itself.

The discussion is not the chief place for learning new facts, but rather for reiterating, comparing, and settling them into a permanent place in the mind. In Herbart's language it is not the place so much for presentation, but for comparison and generalization (see p. 30). There is much to be said for any discussion which leads the members constantly to refer to the book. This is an aid to concentration, and leads to more thorough knowledge. The same is true as regards study of the illustrations of the book in detail, and study of the map. Nothing destroys confidence like ignorance of geography.

The facts of the mission-field must be compared and welded into a whole with the facts of home life. After a keen discussion as to whether coffee is grown in Uganda, the members will tend to think of Uganda whenever they drink coffee.

Although the meeting is chiefly the place for treading in and emphasizing and sorting the facts acquired in reading, it is also helpful if the leader can widen his own range of knowledge by outside reading and induce others to do the same. The introduction of crisp and pertinent illustrations or quotations from outside sources both enlivens and stimulates discussion.

When facts are in dispute, the text-book should be the authority, unless a higher one is available.

Mental Momentum.

It is the leader's aim to get life and vigour and momentum into the discussion. Dullness is his greatest enemy, and any price is worth paying for enthusiasm.

So if the members begin to get really keen upon some theme, even if it is not quite directly to the point, the leader may be thankful; for their enthusiasm supplies the meeting with momentum, which may afterwards be diverted into another direction.

As in hunting, it is of prime importance to get the horse to go (and his speed is generally greatest when in pursuit); once he has got speed up he can be guided aright. But no amount of guiding is any use without the speed.

Transitions.

Pursuing the simile of the hunter, when he is going fast the tendency is all the stronger to continue in the same straight

line, and any sudden turn may lead to disaster. Either the speed must be diminished to enable him to take the turn, or else a wide sweeping curve must be followed in which the direction is gradually changed so as hardly to be felt.

The analogy exactly applies to Circle leading. The skilful leader may make the transition so gentle and gradual that all the momentum is kept up and carried over into the new subject (see example below). Unless he can do this, he had better just preserve absolute silence (in extreme cases he may stifle a yawn). Nothing so quickly exhausts interest in a discussion, and then the next point can be introduced.

Digressions.

Undoubtedly the best way to treat digressions is to avoid them. But it sometimes happens that the members get very keen upon some side-track, whereas the leader wants to pass on. What is he to do ?

First let him be thankful that they are keen on anything, for this gives him his opportunity. When the Circle is flat, the leader must be alert and work hard ; when they are discussing hard, he can rest on his oars and reflect. His first question is what is the value of the present discussion ? If it is worth pursuing, either for itself, or because of their interest in it, he will be wise to sacrifice a part of his programme to let them go on.

If he decides to bring them back, he must only in the last resort make a call to order. He must first try the tactics of the last paragraph. A Circle once was discussing the religion of pagan Africa, and the Assignment consisted in the leader's impersonating an objector who did not think they needed converting. One of the Circle appealed to the authority of the Bible, and the meeting drifted into a discussion upon this topic. The leader let them get warm and then broke in with 'Well, I am convinced of the authority of the Bible, but what I say is, that it is much more needed in this country than in pagan Africa.' This was hotly challenged, and so the discussion brought back to the need of the Pagans.

It is no easy matter always to swing a discussion round, and if this cannot be done, a quiet request that some one will read the Aim once again, is better than a sharp call to order.

If force has to be resorted to in order to close a discussion, the leader should take a vote of the members as to whether it should be closed, or some other part of the programme sacrificed. This avoids resentment.

Digressions which interest the whole Circle must be much more leniently dealt with than those where one or two persist in digressing to the annoyance of the rest.

Irrelevant questions are better answered, otherwise there is a tendency to pursue them further, whereas a brief answer is the speediest way of disposing of them.

Various Contingencies.

When a question is misunderstood it is well to repeat it, discover where the misunderstanding lies and correct it. This is better than at once putting it in different terms which may only deepen the confusion.

Where a term is being used in different senses, it is well to define the sense employed. The leader should never quarrel about definitions, but allow any that is offered, provided the meaning is clear.

Sometimes the leader will find that an Assignment has failed to grip, and that no one has prepared it. In such a case the leader might briefly bring out his own preparation of the Assignment, in order to fill in the connecting link, and then pass on.

A frequent cause of difficulty is the absence of members who have prepared a special part of the programme. It is not a bad thing sometimes to let the Assignment fall through that the member may be told what happened, and feel the importance of regularity.

Summarizing.

Fairly frequent summaries, especially at the end of Assignments or other natural turning-points, are a help to all. Leaders often ask, ‘How can I learn to summarize well?’

It is largely a matter of practice. The art consists in centring interest in what is actually being said, and making brief notes on the salient points. An opportunity must then be seized of further reducing these, by sifting out only the main outlines, and then reproducing this in a methodical

form. The temptation of giving just one's own thoughts instead of summarizing the actual discussion must be resisted. The leader may well delegate the task of summarizing to anyone who can do it efficiently.

Wrong Conclusions.

If the leader observes that the members are drifting towards a wrong conclusion, what should he do ?

In minor matters or matters of opinion he should leave them absolutely free, merely expressing his own as vigorously as he pleases like any other member.

But in vital matters affecting the Christian faith he must do all he can to avoid them, by careful planning of the programme. In no case will he do much good by dogmatic assertions or attempts to domineer or prevent the members from saying what they think. Here, above all, he must lead *them* to form the right conclusion for themselves, by supplying them with the right material. An interval for prayer may check a wrong spirit : the secret prayer of the leader will also accomplish much.

Should these attempts fail he should not register any decision, saying that they evidently cannot agree, and leaving it to each for further prayer and study of God's word. Those who pray and stick to the Bible, won't go far wrong.

Management of Time.

Certain hints from experience may be useful upon the question of time.

The larger the Circle the longer a given Assignment requires, and as the course advances and interest grows, a longer time is required for the same Circle. So that towards the end of a course, or with a large Circle, fewer Assignments can be taken.

Certain portions of the programme do not take long, but should be unhurried. Such are the opening prayer and explanation of the plan. These need not occupy more than two or three minutes, but attention should be keen.

The same Assignment at the beginning of a session, when people's minds have not started working quickly, is apt to take longer than at the end. Some allowance must be made

for this. The leader is prone, however, to be too indulgent to himself in this matter.

Thorough work always requires time. It necessarily takes much longer to make the members form their own conclusions, and put them in their own words, than it does for the leader to dictate his conclusions to them. But time thus saved is no economy. The leader should cut his programme down and down until it reaches a length which renders thoroughness possible. Time is needed at the end for collecting impressions, framing conclusions, for prayer, and for assigning the preparation of the next chapter. Twenty minutes in an hour's meeting is not too long for these purposes.

Getting all to Join in.

The discussion sometimes tends to become a dialogue between the leader and one member. As long as all are interested this is all right. But if interest flags, the spell must be broken. This can be done either by an appeal to the Circle as to their opinion on the subject, or by addressing one of them personally, 'Mr. ——, what is your view on this?' or by dropping the subject and proceeding to the next item.

Every member has some special piece of experience, or possesses some strong opinion, which can be tapped by a judicious question. The opinions of members as revealed in their votes, or their replies to Assignments, or in personal conversation, may be noted and used. It may even be useful to notice what members talk about as they are leaving, to see where their special interests lie.

Special Members.

Every member is a special member, and much of the art of leadership consists in discerning the special qualities of each and adopting a suitable line of treatment. In this connexion Chapter IV. should be carefully read again. The following hints have nearly all been given in answer to questions arising out of actual experience.

Should the treatment demanded in the interests of the member be contrary to the interests of the Circle as a whole,

the leader must weigh which deserves most consideration at the moment. The best results will come from sometimes letting the one and sometimes the other prevail. It is often better to lose the interest of the Circle for a whole meeting than to lose a member for ever.

Shy Members.

Shyness is a personal quality of those who possess strongly the instinct of self-repression (see p. 43). It shows itself in a lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes, and a dislike to being the subjects of particular attention. Shyness cannot be conquered by a direct attack; it must be out-flanked.

The secret of dealing with the shy member is to attach value, and so make him attach value, to his own knowledge and opinions. Questions directed to him should be such as he can certainly answer. His special interests should be studied, and his special knowledge and powers brought into play in the way which makes him least conspicuous and yet most conscious of his usefulness. Tasks like taking minutes, sending out notices, &c., which he can perform unobserved, will ensure his interest.

Meanwhile, endeavour should be made so to arouse his general enthusiasm that it will make him forget his great bugbear—himself.

Talkative Members.

Talkative members are a hard problem. Sympathy is equally necessary with them, and snubbing is seldom effectual.

They may be shown in a quiet talk that others find it harder to express themselves than they do, and that they could often help by holding back ideas they are ready and longing to express, in order to give these slower ones more time to think. It can be suggested that they should habitually take notes, and jot down their ideas on paper in order to put them into the most concise and persuasive form.

Generally their efforts should be directed to writing and reflection rather than speech. They may well be given the most difficult questions, and in asking general questions the leader may look in another direction.

The talkative member may be useful to turn on when discussion is flagging.

The Uninterested and the Interested.

Some members in a Circle may be already keenly interested in Missions, whilst others are fresh to it altogether. The uninterested member tends to be silent because it is 'not in his line' and to feel 'out of it.' The keen member may then tend to monopolize the discussion, to feel he is very much 'in it,' and so to make the former still more uncomfortable.

The uninterested member must be made to feel the value which the leader personally attaches to his presence. The liberty of his opinion must be upheld and the leader must as far as possible take his side. If he criticizes missionary effort, or received opinions, the leader must get him to expatiate upon his views, to give his reasons, &c., and compel the other members to listen respectfully.

Indeed, such a member is of great value to a Circle, and his outside point of view may be extremely instructive. Let him feel this. At the same time, let him realize his ignorance and be gently pressed forward to read and educate himself.

The keenly interested member must be brought on to the leader's side in this matter. His interest must be enlisted in drawing out those who are less interested. The keen member must be held in check, if he shows any disposition to lay down the law. The law must be allowed to prove itself and win its own way.

Original and Discursive Members.

Those who are original may frequently be given special Assignments, asked to take impersonations, &c. Let them have scope for their originality and then bring the product of it to the Circle.

Often original people are discursive. The topic under discussion suggests another idea to them and they want to run off in its pursuit. In such cases the leader may say 'We will discuss that later if there is time,' but there probably won't be time! He must quietly remind members of the Aim, and follow the method given on pp. 73, 74.

The Slow and Thoughtful Members.

Some people are thoughtful and slow, and apt to keep their thoughts to themselves. Such members often make good leaders. They may be given direct questions. They are good members to make specially responsible for opening the discussion of an Assignment.

The leader should not be content to have any Circle proceed long without bringing such a member into the discussion. He is sure to improve and give tone to it.

The Weak and Dull Member.

In most Circles there is a dull member who is not very keen, who is not very interested, not very clever, and, perhaps, not very regular.

The leader must be much on his guard against the temptation of despising this member. His lack of keenness can certainly be cured if he can be got into touch with God and under the influence of His Spirit. The leader must constantly ask himself, regarding such: 'What possibilities of love and service does my Saviour see in this man? How would He treat him and bring out all the best that is in him?' The dull member may be, and often is, simply one whose talents have hitherto been undiscovered, and who is waiting for the fire of God to touch his soul, to be one of the most valuable. Who has not known men of very mediocre gifts who were great and effective workers by reason of their fullness of the Spirit of God? Seek to make this member such a one.

Leader's Don'ts.

1. *Don't lecture.* Time slips by rapidly when you are talking. Watch the eyes of the members, and if they begin to droop, stop—even in the middle of a sentence.

2. *Don't pursue your own thoughts*, or keep returning to them, if the Circle wants to go off on another track. If only their line is within the general plan, you had much better follow them than make them follow you.

3. *Don't drag in your own ideas.* They may have cost you

trouble to prepare, and be very good, but if you can get the Circle along happily by means of their own preparation, so much the better.

4. *Don't burst in* just because you long to say something. Let the others talk, as long as they talk to the point, and a little longer.

5. *Don't be too interested in your own plan,* and forget the members.

6. *Don't digress.* There is no one to call the leader to order.

7. *Don't do anything you can get some one else to do.*

8. *Don't fish* for a particular reply. There is no greater waste of time than a guessing competition.

9. *Don't wrangle over procedure.* Either gently persuade the members to follow your plan, or give way gracefully.

10. *Don't expose the machinery of your own mind.* For example, do not say 'Now I have to find some connexion between this Assignment and the next.' Centre the interest of your members upon the Aim, and not upon your own mental workings.

11. *Don't use mannerisms.*

12. *Don't speak indistinctly.* A mumbling voice is like a blurred photograph.

13. *Don't hesitate,* or use incoherent sentences, in speaking. Do your hesitating before you speak.

14. *Don't lose your head.* It is always worth while letting things drift a little whilst you collect your thoughts and steady yourself.

15. *Don't pan out time.* If you finish too early, it does no harm.

16. *Don't grumble* if you find yourself in a difficult position. Here is a chance to show your powers of leadership. Brace yourself up, and cheer up the others.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE CIRCLE

Atmosphere.

The general 'atmosphere' of the Circle is even more important than the conclusions reached. The latter expresses what the members *think*, the former what they *feel*. If the atmosphere is dreary and formal, the Circle may close by the Circle registering a proposition as to the falsity of Hinduism, and then getting up with a sense of relief that it is over and they can go to bed. Whereas if there has been keenness and earnestness and heartfelt prayer, they will go away with souls burning within them, only to fall upon their knees again when they get home, to plead with God for more labourers.

It is only too common for leaders to complain of the coldness and unresponsiveness of their members. A story is told of a clergyman who complained to the verger of the coldness of the church. 'Well, sir,' was the reply, 'we expect to get warmed up from the pulpit!' So if the leader once feels the responsibility for producing the right atmosphere, the battle is half won. So much of the real work of the Study Circle is personal that the importance of the personal element cannot be exaggerated.

If a member be coldly treated and snubbed, he may possibly be intellectually convinced of his duty, but go away hating the people who have to do with Missions and resolving to have as little to do with them as possible. The leader's chief object is not to win arguments, but to win men; and for this the spiritual and general atmosphere is all-important. They must be made to feel happy in the Circle. In these

circumstances personal friendships may be started which will last through life.

Physical Conditions.

Physical conditions cannot be neglected. If Satan could choose these he could do infinite harm. He would choose a cold, dull, public room, much too large for the purpose, with uncomfortable seats, draughty, and with distracting noises without. On the other hand a private house, with sufficient comfort and plenty of fresh air, facilities for taking notes and a good arrangement of chairs, go far to making a successful meeting. A warm welcome from the host as members arrive, and proper accommodation for coats and hats, are all trifles which can be used in God's service.

Effect of Programme upon the Atmosphere.

A good programme is not only valuable in itself, but it reacts upon the atmosphere of the Circle. In fact the intellectual and the emotional sides interact upon each other. The Circle feel most happy and yet most enthusiastic when working their hardest, and conversely they can only do their best work when the atmosphere is happy and enthusiastic. What is needed most from this point of view is that the programme of work and discussion should be closely fitted to the interests, needs, and general condition of the Circle. It is as hard for them to feel happy, with an ill-fitting set of Assignments, as for a man to feel comfortable in an ill-fitting coat.

The Leader's Example.

There is something ridiculously infectious about the example of the leader. Anyone can test this for himself. What is more infectious than a hearty laugh? But when a whole Circle are laughing, let the leader simply set his face to a serious consideration of his notes, and their heads will go down to their notes likewise, and he will have composed them more quickly than by any word of command. Their imitation of his mood is swifter than thought itself.

If he wants them to be enthusiastic he must show enthusiasm; and if he displays weariness, they will begin to feel weary too. If he is flippant, they will follow suit, and likewise

if he is serious. Nothing makes a Circle shy like the shyness of the leader, but if he is at his ease he puts them at their ease also.

It is hard at first to believe the extraordinary power of example in the matter of the emotional attitude; but close observation will soon bring conviction.

Therefore, let the leader's motto be: *Resolve to be what you want your Circle to become.*

Ease and Informality.

Those who say that 'Missions are dull,' have generally caught this feeling in some dull and chilly meeting. The best way to avoid stiffness and formality is to study closely those conditions which tend to dispel it.

Who has not felt the contrast in coming out of church between the atmosphere of restraint and convention inside, with that of freedom and unconventionality as we walk home with a friend. Alas, it is not infrequent after a Study Circle breaks up to find that those who had been silent in the Circle begin to talk freely as they stand around before leaving. The leader's aim is to produce this atmosphere within the Circle meeting.

Let him first get into this attitude himself, and talk as freely as he would in ordinary conversation, really wanting to exchange views, and interested in what others think. The more the Circle session can be assimilated to an ordinary conversation, and the more the leader can trust to a strong Aim and Assignments to guide it, without external control, the more the members will accept it as a conversation, and talk freely.

Let the leader, therefore, after the opening prayer, begin without formalities. If he notices stiffness in some, let him treat it as he would if they were paying an afternoon call, by not noticing it too much, but by trying to turn the talk into a channel interesting to them.

If the members remain icy, the leader must not give way, but be all the warmer and brighter, until he thaws them with his sunshine.

He must not force the pace, however, especially in the first meeting. It would not put a prim, elderly gentleman at

his ease to be slapped on the back and called 'old boy' at the first acquaintance. He must not force outward expression, and must be content to do most of the talking till things settle down.

It is essential to be clear as to the names and personalities of the members. He will be careful not to jump on them, or do anything of which they are probably frightened before they come, or which would make them feel awkward or self-conscious.

Confidence.

The shyest people in the world have times when they chatter freely enough and pour their feelings out to their friends. How can the leader bring it about that the Study Circle shall be the place where this happens?

The leader must first of all have confidence in himself, or rather, in God. He must strictly repress all unworthy nervousness, and trust God to see him through. With this confidence, he will not be constantly apologizing. It is necessary to do so sometimes, but it is often wiser to be stern with himself and say little. Let him be careful about punctuality both in beginning and ending; but there is no greater mistake than to worry the members by continually telling them there is not enough time. If he quietly makes his own plans to speed things up, or make certain omissions, and meanwhile centres their thoughts on the discussion itself, and if he keeps to time, he will soon gain their confidence.

Let him never say as much as he knows; let his informality not degenerate into folly; and let him generally show restraint.

But the golden keys to open confidence are sympathy and patience. The leader must think, and feel *with* his members, as well as for them.

Here, for instance, is one with a deep-rooted prejudice, in which all his family share, that Native Christians are all frauds. Such prejudices are eradicated slowly, and there is no need to receive them either with horror or angry dispute. If the leader respects his opinion, but suggests that he should read for himself upon the subject, and supplies him with literature, the prejudice will soon disappear and the member's

confidence will be won far more surely than by a more hustling method.

Here is another member of an opposite kind, brought up in a strict home, who shyly ventures the view that Mohammed was, of course, an instrument of Satan. Whatever the leader thinks, he might follow up such a clue by asking the others if the same idea had occurred to them. If not, he might ask the member how the idea first came into his mind, and indeed try to think with him patiently, and from his point of view. We all need encouragement, and feel strongly drawn to those who encourage us.

Gentleness and tact win the day when forcefulness may lose it. As each member finds out that the leader understands him and his ways and likings, so his confidence grows, and his responsiveness increases.

This need of mutual confidence goes down to the foundations. As the members come to regard the Circle not as a public meeting, but as a little group of friends whom they can trust, they will begin to do things they would not do elsewhere. They will not fear to make mistakes, which is the first step to learning. They will not fear to open their lips in prayer when they can feel that the rest are not criticizing, but are praying with and for them. They will lay bare their deeper feelings and seek for spiritual help when they know this confidence will be respected.

The greatest results of Study Circle work have only come about where such an atmosphere has existed, and it is worth almost any price the leader has to pay for it.

Brightness.

Physical warmth and light are essential to a bright atmosphere. You can't feel bright when you sit shivering and can hardly see to read. If, in addition to physical brightness, the leader can impart a mental vivacity to the discussions, he will have done well.

The leader must be bright himself. If he feels inclined to settle down to a jog-trot monotony, he must first just shake himself and see that he doesn't. He must not settle down, or dullness will set in.

It is wonderful how much a clear enunciation helps. The

writer has watched Circles go to sleep chiefly because the leader put his questions in a listless, half inaudible tone. The same Circle completely woke up under another leader whose style was clear and smart.

Variety of treatment also makes a meeting brighter. Do not have it all discussion. In their proper place use maps and pictures, or introduce photographs, or curios, or illustrations; get members to use pencil and paper in making lists, or writing down notes; call on first one member and then another to read out the Assignment or take other necessary part. Even a variety of attitude may help.

Let the leader's own contributions be put in the most concrete, vivid, and 'snappy' form. A carefully chosen anecdote or two puts life into a meeting. Let him remember always, however, that things are brighter for the person talking than for the listeners; so let him distribute the talking as evenly as possible.

Co-operation.

It is the glory of British games that they develop a spirit of co-operation and *esprit de corps*. Let us study how this is done—for example, in a game of football. A captain is appointed and obeyed, but every man has his place and his work in the team. No member, not even the captain, speaks of 'my' match, or 'my' victory. In the course of play unselfishness is encouraged, because interest is centred not in the individual, but in the united achievement. Above all, by assigning every man his place, each is made to feel that unless he plays his part, the whole team suffers. He must be in his place and do his best. The captain never attempts to perform the task of one of his men but makes each absolutely responsible for his own work.

There is no doubt as to the success of games in producing *esprit de corps*, and all the points in the above description, and many others, are worth minute study and imitation. Co-operation is a product of the instinct of possession and the social instinct (see pp. 41, 43).

As the leader seeks the glory of the Circle rather than his own, and shows the members that each has a necessary place to fill and is expected to fill it, so this spirit will increase.

People rise marvellously to what is expected of them. (See p. 59.)

Responsibility.

The development of a feeling of responsibility in the members is only another aspect of what has preceded. Let us look at this word 'responsibility' in its literal sense. It means the feeling that a response, an answer, must be given. This is the feeling we need.

Nothing develops this like a direct personal question. If the leader asks, generally, 'Do you think Mohammed was a prophet?' there may be dead silence, because no one feels responsible to answer. But if the question be prefaced by 'Mr. A, do *you*,' &c.,' Mr. A. is pretty sure to answer.

Often a shy person, ready to give an opinion but not daring, will be helped by a direct question.

A spirit of responsibility for the truth of conclusions reached, for the best use of the time, for keeping to the point, and for all other matters that affect the well-being of the Circle can also be developed. From the leader's point of view it is an excellent maxim, 'Whatever goes wrong is the fault of the leader'; but it is a maxim which will never do for members. They must be taught, 'Whatever goes wrong is the fault of the Circle!' for that side has truth in it as well as the other.

When they are trying to think out a problem, or to frame a neat summary, the leader must not do too much for them. Let him aid them, but not enough to sap their feeling of responsibility.

Earnestness.

A spirit of earnestness in the Circle does not imply that laughter and fun are to be ruled out. In their place they promote fellowship and afford a lighter side, which directly contribute to the spirit desired.

The true opposite of earnestness is not laughter, but listlessness. It is heartrending to hear a group of people assent to any vitally important truth without emotion. 'Are the Heathen without hope apart from Christ?' is a

question which might be answered with a light, conventional 'Yes,' a thousand times worse than a living thoughtful challenge.

Where there is this apathy the leader must try to rouse the Circle to the eternal and terrible nature of the issues at stake by searching questions, and by allowing his own feelings to show themselves. If it be due to lack of imagination, clear pictures must be presented to the mind of the issues by concrete questions, or by detailed description if it be due to spiritual shallowness. Prayer, vocal or silent, reference to the Bible, a reminder of Christ's presence or His speedy coming, may be introduced in place.

Sometimes silence produces this spirit of earnestness better than much talking. Often the individual needs time for the Spirit of God to work. When we get to the heart of things, and matters of personal religion come up, the leader must be patient. Such times are the life-blood of a Circle, and everything, even punctuality, must be sacrificed when it is evident that the Spirit of God is working.

As an example of what is meant here, an actual case may be quoted. The leader led the Circle to discuss the chief need of the Church in view of the Moslem menace, and then suggested to them, 'We need a second Pentecost, don't we?' His intense earnestness impressed them, and as they discussed, he repeated the same words over and over again. At last discussion dropped, and the leader talked on about how to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He closed with prayer and then handed round a booklet upon how the Holy Spirit may be received.

The whole procedure served its purpose admirably; but its success was due to the earnestness of the leader, and doubtless also to his private prayer beforehand.

It is admittedly difficult to bring the Circle face to face with deep spiritual truths without it being resented. But over and over again the leader who is alert will be able to suggest thoughts in this way which the Spirit of God will apply to the heart and conscience of the individual. Even where open discussion of questions of personal religion is difficult, they may be so suggested that they will at least be thought over afterwards in private.

Spiritual Tone.

Much the most important side of the atmosphere of the Circle is its spiritual tone. The leader can do more for this by his prayers than by his plans ; but still he may plan as well as pray.

In the spiritual realm, as in the intellectual, the thing that matters is what goes on in the minds and consciences of the members. It is not enough that the leader should be in touch with God himself : he wants them to be in touch. Thus stated, it is clear that the spiritual tone of the Circle is limited and conditioned by the progress attained by the members in their spiritual life. It is literally impossible to have the same atmosphere in a group composed of worldly people, whose interest in spiritual things is only just new born, as would be possible in a group of keen Christian workers. What is required is not that the former Circle should endeavour to imitate the latter, but that the Spirit of God should work in each according to their present stage of spiritual growth.

This must be clearly borne in mind, or disaster will result. Even so desirable a thing as extempore prayer may not be in place in certain Circles, from whom it might evoke no response at all unless one of antagonism. The question for the leader to ask is, 'What does the Spirit of God want from *this* Circle ? What is the next stage in *their* spiritual growth ?'

It may be that unconverted people will join a Circle, and such can never appreciate spiritual things until they be born again (1 Cor. ii. 14). It may be that 'envyings and strife' are preventing the spiritual progress of others, and that they need putting away. The *manifestation* of the spiritual tone of the Circle will vary over the whole range of Christian experience. What is to be looked for is spiritual progress and growth.

The spiritual tone of the Circle depends upon their spiritual progress, collectively as well as individually. One member may be praying earnestly in his heart, but outward expression may be chilled by the flippancy of others. Hence all that has been said before about earnestness, mutual confidence, and even informality, affects really the spiritual tone and progress of the Circle.

It is an important practical point, therefore, not to attempt to get much expression of personal religion early in the course, before mutual confidence and a spirit of earnestness are established. Ice must be melted before water can be brought to the boiling-point. In general (there are exceptions) there is a natural progress from that which is intellectual, external, and connected with the natural life, on towards that which is spiritual, personal and connected with the deeper life within. There should be a steady deepening and getting down to spiritual things as the Circle proceeds.

The Bible.

The Bible should be constantly at hand for reference, and not merely in set Assignments. It is God's hand-book of missionary principles to settle every doubt, and give light in every question. Is it a question of our attitude to idolatry? Or of the place of the ministry of bodily healing in Missions? Or of Christian giving? On every point there is abundant light for those with eyes opened to see.

The authority of the Bible should be assumed. Should it be challenged, the leader need not trouble to defend it. He may act on Spurgeon's advice when asked how he would defend the Bible from attack: 'As I would defend a lion—let it loose!' On the other hand, there is the danger that its familiar words may be accepted without their depth and force being fully realized.

Prayer.

The following words, occurring in an article upon 'A New Type of Christian Fellowship,' are worth attention:—

> ' The end of a Circle is the creation of an atmosphere in which the apprehension of facts forces men and women to prayer. The intercession with which the Circle closes ought to be the flower and fruit of all that has preceded it—definite, passionate, and only the beginning of a life of intercession into which the members have together entered.

The question of training others to pray will be fully treated in the next chapter (pp. 99–105). Here our purpose is to show its bearing upon the atmosphere of the Circle.

From every point of view a brief opening prayer is an appropriate beginning to the meeting. It is scarcely conceivable that anyone would join a Circle who would object to this in some form.

God loves to answer prayer, and we know it to be His way to manifest His presence more notably where His blessing is sincerely and unitedly asked for.

An opening prayer has also a marked influence upon the minds of the members. By dint of long association it marks off the meeting as one for a religious purpose, and summons a helpful attitude of mind. It forms a transition also, when the general conversation ceases, and each heart looks upward to God, before coming to deal with the subject in hand.

As to the closing time of prayer, however conducted, it forms for many the climax of the meeting. Business men have often referred to the time of prayer as that part of the meeting which made the whole thing worth the sacrifice of time involved. Here, at least, they feel, something is being not only discussed, but actually accomplished. And they are right.

Worship and Consecration.

Confession, worship, and praise are surely not to be neglected when the discussion raises feelings of which they are the appropriate expression.

Communion with God is, of all forms of prayer, the most difficult to turn into a united act, unless, as above, in worship and praise. In many Circles a united attendance at the Lord's Table may be arranged.

Some Circles may be brought to a close with a definite act of consecration, and where this is in place, and undertaken in utter dependence upon God, it may be a means of great blessing. In such a case a closing Assignment may be selected in order to lead up definitely to this close. Two forms which this might take may be specified.

Where the Circle contains those whose life-work is still an open question, the matter of consecration might be made to turn upon the question, 'Am I willing to go if God calls me?' A suitable Assignment would be, 'What constitutes a missionary call?' Very special Divine guidance is needed for

the conduct of such a meeting; but if it meant an offer for the mission-field, who could measure its value in the light of eternity? A pamphlet, *Do not say*, by the Rev. J. H. Horsburgh, may be used.

In other cases, the session may be made to turn upon the need of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Since the sanctification of the Church is the key to the missionary problem, there is scarcely any course where this might not be found a suitable culmination for one of the meetings. A pamphlet on *The Holy Spirit*, by the Rev. R. A. Torrey, may be used.

The reader will scarcely need to be reminded that he cannot hope to bring such vital matters before others, unless his ears are open to hear, and his heart ready to obey, what God may have to say to himself upon them.

The Leader's Part.

If in so external a thing as attitude the leader's example is important, it is far more weighty in setting the spiritual tone of the Circle. He must constantly have his eyes turned to God for help, if he would have the members look upward also. In so sacred a matter we would write with caution, but it would seem that spiritual results can only be accomplished through the agency of those who are filled with the Spirit themselves.

For the spiritual tone to be right the leader must be constantly in touch with God. When keenly taking part in a discussion, or when eagerly listening to the unfolding of some member's ideas, underneath there must be the resting and dependence upon the everlasting arms. Behind every problem there must be the question, 'What would the Lord Jesus Christ wish us to think? How does He see it from the Throne?'

Behind every practical step there should be the mute appeal for Divine guidance, 'Lord, what wouldst Thou have us to do?' Behind every desire to influence the spiritual lives of others, there must be the realization of his own inability and the old pentecostal prayer for the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit.

The leader's attitude within the Circle is dependent upon the state of his spiritual life as a whole. Experience will prove to him that this high ideal can only be approached

when he is faithful in his prayers and communion with God over the Word and upon his knees, as well outside as inside the Circle. A sharp word or unkind thought at the dinner-table may, if unrepented of, ruin the spiritual tone of the Study Circle an hour later. The leader, on the other hand, who is kept in the love of God, and will give time to seek and receive God's Holy Spirit for this service, will prove that none ask in vain (St. Luke xi. 13).

The gift of the Holy Spirit is essential. If the reader has never experienced this gift and power, will he now break away for a few minutes to ponder over this matter, and to set aside a time for seeking Him—God's unspeakable gift?

* * * * *

The ideal here set may seem very high. The leader is told to remember the Aim, to take his part as a member of the Circle, to watch the members and be interested in them, and now to keep his whole soul uplifted to God all the time. Is this possible? It is at least possible for every one to be filled with the Spirit of God, for God has commanded it (Eph. v. 18), and 'His biddings are enablings.' Once let there be willingness and desire, and God will do the rest. If once we are right with God, He will do all His will through us, and marvellous things will result.

Spiritual influence and power is the one thing worth living and working for. A leader who takes much trouble over a Study Circle and neglects the spiritual side, is like a diamond-merchant who spends all his money in sinking mines and then neglects to bring up the diamonds! The whole apparatus of the Study Circle only exists for the sake of its spiritual influence, and the leader who neglects this is labouring in vain. But once he really and persistently prays for God's Holy Spirit, he may be sure of a response, even if he never sees it. Such seed always brings forth fruit, though sometimes long delayed.

CHAPTER IX

TRAINING

Varieties of Training Needed.

Within certain broad limits the convictions to be planted, and the interest to be aroused, are much the same for all Circles. But when we come to the question of training, there is great diversity in the specific aims which the leader may set before him.

In a Circle of undergraduates it would be reasonable to expect many afterwards to become leaders, and some to become missionaries, but not reasonable to expect large gifts of money immediately. In a Circle of middle-aged business men, the exact converse would hold.

It must be understood clearly, therefore, that the hints regarding training in this chapter are only of limited application.

Where Training is Possible.

It is not the willingness, but the *capacity* of the member that should be first considered. If one of the members has in him the makings of a good speaker, his training in this direction should be a definite aim. Willingness may come with the training, or as a direct answer to prayer.

In the second place, the *natural bent* and qualifications of the member must be taken into account. Those with artistic power may be trained along one line, those with good voices along another. Training can only cultivate an innate capacity.

Some are born leaders; and if they are not leading Study Circles they will be captains of hockey teams, secretaries of

clubs, or otherwise in the forefront. Such may be trained to lead and will take pleasure in it. But others are born to follow. Such may be trained to secretarial work, to execute the plans which others have made.

Moreover, training is only possible where there is still a certain amount of plasticity (see Chapter XII.). Some are either too old to be trained, or will resent the very idea of receiving help.

The Place of Habit in Life.

Man has been described as a bundle of habits; and reflection will convince anyone of the enormous part which habit plays in life. The question of whether people go to missionary meetings or not is largely a matter of habit. The daily actions which we are constantly performing—walking, reading, writing—are all extremely complex processes which cost us much effort to learn as children, and would cost us enormous effort now, were it not for the operation of habit, which enables us now to do automatically what once cost us care and effort.

The effect of habit is twofold: it has a power to bind and a power to loose.

Its power to bind is widely recognized. The person who at the parish prayer-meeting prays every time finds it hard to abstain; the person who is habitually silent finds it almost impossible to pray. Every habit gets harder and harder to break the longer it is practised; and this is true of good as well as bad ones.

But habit also has a power to loose. When we have formed the habit (for example) of praying aloud, it is easier than it was at first to forget the mere act of praying and think of the subject of the prayer. The effect of habit, by rendering the mechanism of the act easier, releases the energies for the direction of the activity.

The Relation of Habit to Training.

From one point of view, training may be regarded as the formation of habits. Let us illustrate by musical training. The beginner must concentrate attention upon the keys,

and how to find the right key with the right finger. Soon, with practice and guidance, this becomes habitual, and the attention is released for the reading of the notes. With still further training, this in turn becomes automatic, and the attention is released for the details of time and expression.

Hence, we see that training really consists in the formation of habits under instruction and guidance. Partly by instruction, partly by example, but most of all with practice under correction, the right habits are acquired. As the simpler elements become habitual, more and more complex processes become possible.

The former example of prayer may be compared with that just given, and the reader may work out the comparison for himself.

Practice and Theory.

Although practice is a fundamental part of training, it would be incomplete without a certain amount of theory. Especially in the acquisition of an art like that of Circle-leading, the two need combining. Either without the other is a one-legged affair.

Until the leader has had sufficient practice, the attention is so centred upon the programme and the mechanical side of things, that he has little power to think of the members and their needs, still less to put into practice such theories as are laid down in this manual. But with practice, habit comes to his relief, and he can think somewhat of what he has read.

At the same time without the theory to guide his practice, the latter would only go on confirming him in any bad habits he had acquired.

So we see that in training others we chiefly need to supply them with an opportunity for practice, and not with abundant theory. But as they proceed to learn by practice, they need guidance both (*a*) in concrete cases as they arise, and then (*b*) by way of general rules which they can understand and use to regulate their own practice.

These principles will now be applied in detail to certain special aspects of training.

Training in Expression.

Much latent power is running to waste because those who possess enthusiasm and knowledge do not possess the power of expression. Scores possess sufficient gifts to make effective speakers who never use them. There is ability enough and to spare—the call is for training.

The ordinary machinery of the Circle causes all to express their opinions and ideas to a certain extent. Good public speaking can only come by practice. Great orators have often broken down in their first attempts; and many a great orator has been lost to the world because he was not encouraged at the time of his first failure. The leader can begin by sympathetically helping the beginners to frame their ideas, first in sentences, then in longer and longer statements. This can be further developed by encouraging short papers, or short statements, with a view to opening the discussion. Once members have broken through the ice they can be encouraged to read papers or give addresses at small gatherings of sympathetic people, like the Gleaners' Union. Some may be led on to address meetings of children, or to speak at small gatherings—such as Bible-classes, mission-rooms, &c.

The Study Circle should be a breeding-ground for speakers.

Training in Advocacy.

What is required in an effective missionary advocate? (1) A ready knowledge of facts suitable to the refutation of common objections; (2) ability to marshal these effectively; (3) sympathy to discern the origin of the objection, and the course of argument most likely to win the objector. The Study Circle may develop all of these.

Evidently, one method is to give plenty of practice in answering imaginary objectors, or in drawing up appeals for missionaries, &c. The leader may utilize these occasions also to point out how the reply or appeal might have been improved.

The more the Assignments can be approximated to actual experience, the more likely the training is to find some outlet for exercise. In a certain Circle the Assignment was given, 'Write a letter to an imaginary friend persuading him to be a missionary;'

and within a week such a letter had been posted by one member to a real friend. By thinking out the actual circumstances of the members and how they can exercise the function of missionary advocates, the leader can design Assignments for their training. There is no need to hide what he is doing. Let him work tactfully, and as the members begin to realize their increased powers in enlisting others to the missionary cause, they will value more and more any training that will help them to do so. Practice and training will stimulate each other.

Training in Conclusive Thinking.

The great lack of conviction in the present day is largely due to loose, sloppy, and inconclusive thinking. A great service would be performed to the young people of our age if they could be trained into the habit of thinking out important questions, and coming to a conclusion. What is the reason that the number of offers of missionary service are so miserably inadequate to the need? It is not because God has made the mistake of not calling a sufficient number. We can only conclude that God is calling hundreds who are not listening to that call: who think about being missionaries, but who do not think the matter out to a conclusion. Conclusive thinking is a habit. The leader can help to form this habit by propounding questions and problems which are capable of a conclusive answer, and guiding discussion so that a definite conclusion is reached. The work is hard, but is worth doing.

Training Missionary Secretaries.

The Study Circles should be the training-ground for the missionary officers of the congregation. What makes a good secretary? (1) Power faithfully and regularly to fulfil routine duties; (2) energy and originality; (3) general missionary knowledge and enthusiasm.

The leader can experiment as regards the first by making one member librarian to supply books for outside reading and seeing they are regularly returned; by asking another regularly to keep minutes; by letting another act as general secretary to send notices to absent members, &c.

In this way they may not only be trained, but tested in a way that is otherwise impossible. For the experiment cannot easily be made upon a missionary union, lest a bad secretary should wreck it altogether; whereas the Study Circle provides them something to do responsible enough, but not too responsible. The wise leader will always be on the look out for little jobs which he can entrust to one and another for this purpose.

By holding imaginary committees and appointing temporary chairmen he may also give training in committee work and chairmanship.

Indeed, many and many a busy parochial worker, burdened with detailed work for which he cannot find a substitute, would find it worth his while to start a Study Circle for the very purpose of training young helpers. Let him select a dozen young people, any of whom might possess the latent capacity, and form them into a Study Circle. Here he could simultaneously arouse their interest and enthusiasm and train them ultimately to take from him some of his present duties.

Training in Prayer.

The vast importance of prayer demands for it a detailed treatment. In the present section, we shall analyse and set forth the necessary elements out of which a habit of prevailing prayer can be built up, and then endeavour to show how the members may be trained along these lines.

By the word 'prayer,' we shall denote the bringing of definite requests to God to be answered, though much of what follows will apply also to praise, worship, and whatever is included in prayer in its widest sense.

No better definition of the first element of prayer—desire—can be given than in Montgomery's hymn :—

> Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
>   Utter'd or unexpress'd,
> The motion of a hidden fire,
>   That trembles in the breast.

Once a real desire is created for the conversion of the heathen, for an increase of labourers, or other cognate objects, it is a hidden fire within the breast strongly moving to prayer.

Prayer also involves faith in God. A careful study of the passages on this topic (see especially St. Mark xi., Hebrews xi., James i. and v.) will show that this involves not only a vivid realization of God's existence, but the understanding of His purposes, the study of His promises in Scripture, and conformity to His Will.

Further, for prayer to be normally effective there must be opportunity for expression. All experience confirms the Bible truth that God loves to *hear* His children pray, asking for what they desire. As with the importunate friend, the need and the provision did not complete the story. There was also the asking and receiving.

Finally, prayer is a habit. Unless regularly kept up, it becomes less natural and more difficult. It needs a definite and regular place in the life.

The Formation of Desires.

This subject has been fully discussed in Chapters III and IV; and the present application only enforces the importance of what has gone before.

Especially can prayer be promoted by giving to the members a vivid and clear picture of the actual needs and their circumstances. If they can be got clearly to picture the Heathen groping for light, without God and without hope, they will be the more inclined to pray. It has been well said that there would be no more war if all people could picture what war really meant. As the actual condition of heathenism becomes an ever-present picture, and as the needs of converts and catechists are printed on the imagination, prayer is sure to be called forth.

Exactly as the mind forms new convictions and grasps new facts, so, given the right emotional tone, new desires will invade the soul, and burn there until relief is found in prayer.

Training in Faith.

Faith is the gift of God, but it can be trained by example and by exercise.

The leader who would increase faith may do so by repeatedly turning attention to the great things God has

done in the past, His providence, His guidance, His provision of every need, His definite answers to prayer.

By introducing Assignments which directly show the greatness of the need and the insufficiency of human supply, the members are thrown upon God, and faith is stimulated.

Let the leader always exercise faith himself; 'Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.'

Above all, as he encourages definite and believing prayer, and as answers come, the best of all training in faith will be given. Our Lord trained His disciples by showing them examples of answered prayer (St. Mark xi. 21, 22).

Individual Prayer.

There are divers ways in which the leader can encourage individual private prayer. Where he notices a special interest he may point it out as a subject for prayer in private. He may pass round pamphlets upon prayer, prayer cycles, or intercession papers, commenting upon their use. Better still, he can encourage each member to form his own weekly cycle for daily prayer whilst the Circle is in progress. He may ask them at each session to supply topics for prayer and suggest that they should use them in private. Especially he may press the duty of private prayer upon those who take no active part in united prayer.

He may speak personally on the subject, and pray with the members alone, one by one.

United Prayer.

> The saints in prayer appear as one,
> In word, and deed, and mind.

Whilst great promises are attached to united prayer, there is no doubt of its difficulty. It presupposes unity of heart and desire and unity of mind and thought.

It follows as a matter of absolute necessity that united prayer is only possible where the desires and minds of the members have been unified (to some extent) by the preceding discussion, and when the prayer follows along the lines of that unity. No rigid form of prayer can accomplish this, though occasionally a Collect may present requests in a summary form. But if definite petitions are to be made, and detailed

desires made known to God, greater liberty of expression is essential.

The New Testament gives several instances of united prayer, Acts iv. 24, xii. 12, xx. 36, xxi. 5; 1 Cor. xiv. 13–16, Eph. v. 19, vi. 19; Phil. iv. 6. In every single case the context more or less distinctly implies what is now known as extempore prayer, and in the first case the very words are given. How singularly and manifestly has God marked out this means of grace for our blessing! Moreover, there has never been a great revival of religion, from Pentecost onward, which has not been preceded by informal prayer-meetings in which a few have unitedly poured out their souls to God.

But so much prejudice exists against this simple and natural method of prayer, and unity of heart and spirit is so hard to attain, that we must proceed to examine other methods of offering united prayer.

Fixed Forms of Prayer.

The right place for liturgical prayer is obviously in large gatherings of people, possessing different private needs, but meeting to present common and therefore extremely general petitions to God.

For the purpose of such gatherings the Book of Common Prayer is admirably adapted. But such gatherings differ *toto cælo* from the Study Circle. They are public, not private; they are formal, not informal; they are general in character, not specific; they represent daily needs and do not discuss a particular topic.

At the opening of a session certain Collects may be generally appropriate; but any fixed form at the close of a meeting violates the first principles we have just been expounding, for the essence of these is that the prayers should express the desire created, and for this purpose some spontaneity is essential.

In opening the session the Collect has the advantage of being received without prejudice by those who are not accustomed to spontaneous prayer, and of expressing concisely and in general terms a request for God's blessing.

Such prayers as the Lord's Prayer and the Grace are always in place as summaries, but cannot replace the more particular petitions.

Other Methods of Prayer.

There are some methods of offering prayer which avoid the objection to fixed forms, whilst forming an easy transition to spontaneous extempore prayer.

1. In one Circle, cards were handed drawn up: 'Please pray for ——.' At the close of the discussion the leader filled these in according to the desire of the members, and then handed them round, expecting each member simply to offer the petition. It is noteworthy that within two years three members of this Circle entered missionary training.

2. The leader may collect topics of prayer from the members, and himself (or another member) form them into a Litany, 'That it may please Thee . . .', the members responding, 'We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.'

3. The petitions may be collected from the Circle and read out by a member, silence being allowed after each for individual prayer.

4. Members (or the leader) may beforehand write out prayers on topics likely to arise, and read these after the meeting.

Difficulties in Extempore Prayer.

The greatest difficulties with regard to extempore prayer are imaginary. As a matter of fact few people object to extempore prayer when it expresses well their own actual desires. What they really fear is being forced to pray aloud themselves. This is quite natural, just as they fear being forced into being missionaries. The leader must assure them they will not be forced into anything. But he may at the same time resolve to lead them to do it of their own free will.

There must be a certain give and take in extempore prayer just as in discussion. If the person praying follows just his own personal desires, then the others must give way somewhat, and bring themselves in spirit to pray with him. If the person praying endeavours to voice the common desire of all, he must repress to some extent the expression of such desires as are purely individual. Where a true spirit of unity and comradeship exists there can be real union along either of these lines.

One apparent difficulty in extempore prayer is truly a great advantage. If the hearts of the members are not full, there will be no prayer forthcoming. But far better so than the lip-service of a form under the same conditions.

Training to Pray Aloud.

All who are accustomed to pray aloud have made a beginning sometime. Nearly all found that beginning cost them a considerable effort. All are intensely thankful now that they made that effort, and look back with gratitude on those who helped them to make it.

The use of the methods mentioned on pp. 102–3 may be useful in overcoming the initial nervousness that is felt in hearing one's own voice in prayer. Many have begun by writing out their own prayers and have soon discarded their papers.

These methods also afford an easy transition for adults who are accustomed only to fixed forms and are prejudiced against spontaneous prayer.

Diffidence in praying aloud is only another form of diffidence in speaking aloud; and all that has been said on this head (see p. 84) applies with double force to prayer. Mutual confidence and sympathy do much. All must be made to feel that it is the substance and reality, and not the form of the prayer that matters. All must be *expected* to pray sooner or later, and none must be forced against their will.

There is an undue hesitation in asking members (privately and outside the Circle) individually to join in prayer. The writer of this manual never prayed aloud until so asked, and has himself asked others and has never found it resented. Of course tact must be used.

Prayer as a Habit.

Prayer, whether individual or united, must be rendered habitual; and example and practice are needed as the basis of this, as of all other habits.

Somehow—perhaps Satan knows best why—the habit of prayer is difficult to maintain. Just as in reading, united effort brings a stimulus of its own. Where a prayer-meeting exists, and the habit of attending it is formed, it is easier to maintain this than personal prayer.

The provision of a regular plan and a regular time are generally found essential; and the leader should talk with his members privately upon this matter. If done gently, they will welcome it. *Secret Prayer*, by Dr. H. C. G. Moule, and *Quiet Talks on Prayer*, by S. D. Gordon, will be found helpful in this connexion.

Training in Bible Study and Personal Work.

Training in Bible study and personal work do not appear as part of the purpose of a missionary Study Circle so much as of a Bible Study Circle. Yet, paradoxical as it may seem, there are many classes who can be trained in Bible study better through the missionary Study Circle than by the more direct method. Many are not attracted so much by direct Bible study as by the application of the Bible to solve some of the problems of Missions, whereas this leads them on to apply to it again for the solution of their own problems of personal religion.

Let the leader always show his own deep submissiveness to the authority of the Word of God, approaching it as a pupil approaches his teacher, using his mental powers to understand its meaning, but not to question its authority.

He need not extort this attitude from others, for he will teach them by example; though if need be, he can justify his attitude from the words of Christ (e.g., St. Luke xxiv. 45, 46; St. Matt. xxvi. 54–56; St. John v. 35, 46, 47; xiv. 26; xvi. 13).

The leader may likewise use the Circle to train personal workers. The missionary spirit includes the spirit of soul-winning at home. If the Circle is to produce missionaries of the right spirit, they must first 'seek the souls around to win them,' and such training is the best possible for the harder work on the mission-field. There is a crying need for such training: and it helps to correct the tendency of any Circle to become intellectual and impersonal.

A discussion upon how to present the Gospel to the pagan African can easily be turned into one upon how the Gospel can best be presented in our own surroundings; or the duty to preach the Gospel to every creature can be shown to include preaching to those in our own street.

If any members really start doing personal work in earnest

the leader should encourage them to come to tell him their successes, to talk over their difficulties, and to join in united prayer. So the Master taught His disciples.

Training in Leadership.

The readers of this book will not be in danger of thinking the leadership of a Study Circle to be too easy a thing! But they may easily think of it as something too hard for the average person, whereas it is not. Perhaps the greatest wastage in modern Christian life is the loss of hundreds of good average Christian workers because no one has either detected or attempted to develop their talents. The Lord Jesus saw the possibilities in young fishermen and publicans; but His followers too often do not. They forget how much God can do with a surrendered soul. The wise leader, therefore, will try to raise his estimate of the powers of the members in his Circle and to make leaders of them; and he will give up when he finds they are not meant to be such.

The detailed methods of training in Study Circle leadership require several paragraphs to themselves (see pp. 112–118).

The leadership of a Study Circle involves qualities (see p. 117) which, once developed, should fit a man for leadership in many directions.

It is from our Study Circles that the clergy should be able to find superintendents for the Sunday schools, leaders of Bible-classes, and leaders in missionary interest generally.

CHAPTER X

THE OUTCOME OF THE STUDY CIRCLE

Actual Results.

Perhaps the best guide to the leader as to what immediate results he should seek is the experience of others. Several such results are mentioned in the last chapter, viz., advocacy of the cause among friends, missionary addresses, a supply of qualified secretaries for various missionary organizations, leaders of Study Circles, prayer-meetings, and Bible Study Circles, and personal work for winning souls.

To these may be added increased giving and the organization of endless methods of raising money for Missions, e.g. circulation of missionary boxes, working parties, organ recitals, sales of work, canvass of communicants, &c. The circulation of literature, a better parochial organization, the formation of Gleaners' Unions, and almost every form of effort has resulted from one Circle or another.

What Outcome to Expect.

The leader's question is: 'What would Christ have this Circle do, here and now, to advance the missionary cause, if each one were fully surrendered to His Will?' This question should be with him from the beginning of the course, and until its importance impress him, the results will not follow. But when he begins definitely to seek and pray for them, they are assured.

The leader should work through a list of the members, one by one, and in view of their capacities and circumstances write down (for his own eye only) the results in their lives for

which he might pray and plan. He will then adapt his method of training accordingly (see Chap. IX); for evidently the actual result is only the fruit and end of the training.

Enthusiasm and Action.

It is sometimes assumed that a good Circle must produce enthusiasm, and that enthusiasm must issue in action, without further trouble being taken. But this is no more true than the assumption would be that it is sufficient to generate the steam, and that it will then work the engine. More has to be done. It is necessary (1) to have appropriate machinery through which the steam may operate, and (2) to provide closely guarded channels to connect the steam with the effective machinery, lest it escape and leak away in the passage.

The best results are secured where an appropriate machinery is planned out and provided. It is useless suggesting a working party to a group of men, or big subscriptions to a group of girls. The leader must think and plan, and get the members to think and plan with him.

Then the connecting channel must be made and guarded. The plan must be put into operation quickly and definitely before the steam has time to evaporate or leak away (see p. 110).

The Member's Point of View.

It may be assumed that the member, at the end of the Circle, wants to do something. How does he proceed from this position to the actual performance? We may distinguish three stages in the mental process.

First an appropriate outlet is suggested to him—e.g., to interest certain friends. It is essential that the form of effort should appeal to him as desirable; and consequently it is more effective the more part he takes himself in the suggestion.

Secondly, a means appropriate to its performance must be made clear. The action must be discussed and planned, until the idea appeals to him as not only desirable, but practicable.

So far the suggestion is only an idea. But it is a law of the mind that an idea which is steadily kept in consciousness is bound to issue in action. The third stage is reached,

therefore, when the action is actually commenced. The three stages correspond to the member thinking (1) 'I ought,' (2) 'I could,' (3) 'I will.'

However simple this analysis, it is not to be despised, for most of the failure to secure results is just here. The steam is generated and the machine waiting to be worked, but the connexion is not properly made and the steam leaks away in vain words and indefinite desires.

Suggesting Practical Actions.

As the leader lets his mind dwell upon the general scope of the missionary work in the district that needs doing, and the powers of the members to do it, there will be a crystallization of definite plans. He will see that A might lead a Study Circle of his own friends, and that B and C would help him to get it up. Or he will resolve to ask D to act as secretary of a certain Union, or E to give a missionary address in Sunday school. Action can never be taken except in a definite and practical way. Therefore, the only hope lies in getting beyond the stage of vague desire and in making definite plans and resolves.

But how shall the resolves of the leader become the resolves of the Circle? He will secure this by suggestion. In many cases direct suggestion or asking is the most effective method. 'A, could you not get together a Study Circle of your friends? I believe this is a way in which you could do a splendid piece of work, if you would.' But indirect suggestion must also be employed.

The Closing Meeting.

The closing meeting of a course, presumably, represents the point where the interest in the subject reaches its climax and when the members are readiest to turn from study to action. They come like children, saying: 'What shall we do next?'

The leader throws back the challenge upon them: 'What is the next thing to do? Here, above all, he will be wise to watch closely the way in which the members themselves are thinking and follow in their track. His direct control over their thinking is about to cease. It is only the motive

power of their own ideas now that can carry them forward. He will, therefore, seek to define and foster their plans, rather than to force his own. This will not prevent him making definite suggestions, but will guide him as to what those suggestions should be, and to whom they should be made.

Making a Clear Course.

Not infrequently a resolve reaches the stage of being practical and definite, and yet it fails to issue in action because of some trifling difficulty that might easily have been removed.

A member resolves to pray daily for Missions and to use a C.M.S. Cycle, and then goes home to find he does not know where to write for it; so it gets put off, and nothing is done. Just as in the ordinary meeting of the Circle, Assignments are needed to show *how* the Aim is to be accomplished; so in securing practical results it is necessary to discuss and settle the means by which they are to be achieved, and to give all the needed help to start them in the way.

An hour's talk over practical details will make all the difference between the execution of an idea and its failure.

Circles for Practical Ends.

Some Study Circles are directed from the outset towards a practical end and formed with that express intention, e.g., when Circles are formed of Sunday-school teachers to help them teach their children about Missions, or of intending stewards for Missionary Exhibitions seeking to be trained. Such Circles have distinct advantages, and the prospect that the knowledge gained will have a distinct field for exercise adds greatly to the purpose and pleasure of the meetings. This type of Circle is capable of considerable extension. Could not Circles be started for Christian business men expressly to enable them to rebut objections, or for similar purposes?

CHAPTER XI

THE PROPAGATION OF MISSIONARY STUDY

Missionary Study a Means to an End.

Missionary Study is not an end in itself, but it is a means to get every Christian to take his place in God's plan for the world. It is a great educational campaign with a very practical objective and a practical policy and procedure. Thousands of Study Circles must be formed, and in consequence thousands of leaders trained.

But although there is a strong—nay! an imperative—call for those who have the ability to give themselves to training others, there is no fear that this movement will ever become self-centred and exclude the consideration of other forms of missionary effort. On the contrary, it exists to render them possible. Just as in the medical world those who possess the highest skill are set aside for training others, and by so doing, help forward immensely the more direct work of healing; so those who withdraw from the more directly practical work in order to train leaders are, in the long run, the most efficient helpers of the work. Even they may spend much of their time in practical work. But it is as essential to the missionary campaign to have those who will make the work of training others their chief life-work, as it is in medicine or any other great department of life. There are thousands who can do the practical detail, but few who have the gifts of inspiration and understanding to train others; and the call which comes to them is one to which they dare not refuse to listen.

Natural Growth of Study Circles.

The healthy Study Circle is like a living organism or cell, which by its own growth splits up into two or more parts, each of them pursuing an independent life of its own and multiplying in due turn.

Most Circles contain some one capable of leading and of gathering together a fresh Circle of friends. Even when a parish is so fortunate as to have nine or ten Circles existing in the same congregation, so that most of the regular Church members are included, this implies a sufficient missionary force and power to make it possible to tackle outsiders, and so carry on the campaign. Therefore, the ordinary Circle should never settle down to meet year after year in the same form, but should look to a nomad life, existing for a while in one encampment, and then off again to seek fresh fields for enterprise. The Circle must be an ever-widening one.

One member may form a new Circle on his own initiative; or a little knot of two or three will break away for this purpose. Or again, the whole Circle may combine in an effort to start a Circle amongst a new community. In all these ways Circles have grown up, and will do so again.

The Leader's Training Circle.

The most effective method of multiplying Circles is a special Circle for training and inspiring leaders.

The leader should be the best obtainable, but it is a mistake to wait for the ideal person. Anyone who has led an ordinary Circle well, and is willing to take pains and sympathize, will prove efficient. In the following pages a full course of training will be set forth, but something much more simple may prove more effective under certain circumstances.

The elements in which leaders need training are: (1) The construction of programmes; (2) practice leading under criticism; (3) general theory; (4) spiritual tone.

Construction of Programmes.

The best training in forming programmes is for two or three of the members to meet outside the regular sessions of the Training Circle, and plan together a programme of some future Circle.

The leader should appoint this group well ahead and supply them with the printed *Suggestions to Leaders*. He should instruct them individually to prepare a programme and then meet amongst themselves and discuss their Aim and Assignments and their suitability for the particular Circle.

The same group may be asked further to undertake the leadership of the Circle on this occasion, two or more leading in turn. The Assignments must obviously be prepared early enough to be given out at the previous meeting of the whole Training Circle. The detailed working of this plan can be seen on p. 115.

The leader should not be present at the meeting of the group, but any difficulties should be brought to him later.

This method not only gives practice in selecting Aims and Assignments, but proves experimentally that those which attract one do not attract another. Moreover, in defending his own choice each one becomes aware of his reasons for making it, and so is carried from concrete example to general principles. In short, all the principles laid down in Chapters V and VI are brought to the test.

Practice Leading and Criticism.

The leader should always lead one complete session himself, but he must also induce all in turn (if possible) to take a share in the leading, and have their method commented on afterwards.

The leading should have a definite time assigned, and a timekeeper should see that it is adhered to, and should also make brief notes of the progress of the Assignments.

The normal leader meanwhile makes notes for commendation, criticism, or comment. Those who are acting as members of the Circle should not be asked to criticize, but to throw themselves into the subject, so as to give the practice leaders the best chance.

The criticism of this practice leading is by no means easy to conduct. Its essential value is (1) to confirm good habits of leading by commendation, and to check bad ones by criticism; (2) to build up a theory by means of practical examples.

In order to realize these ends the normal leader should study Chapters VII and VIII beforehand, and select two or

three points of method to be watched, e.g., whether the leader keeps to the point, talks too much or too little, is sufficiently encouraging, &c.

When the time for criticism arrives, he should first elicit all the commendation he can, in distinct and definite terms, with reasons given. He may then ask for criticisms and, finally, add any of his own comments which have not been elicited. In addition, he may question the leader as to his reason for doing certain things, or he may suggest some alternative course he might have taken and ask which would have been the more interesting.

All criticism, if possible, should be expressed positively, stating what ought to have been done, rather than negatively. Moreover, where possible, it should be embodied in definite maxims for future use. The members should be urged to take these down and endeavour to practise them.

All that is written regarding encouragement, &c., in Chapter VII has double force in the Training Circle.

General Theory.

Much general theory is taught, and well taught, in the course of the criticism, but it comes up in the disconnected form of crude experience. It is like the field work of the botanist ; the lessons depend upon the flowers that happen to be found in that particular ramble.

Besides this, it is good for the members to have a limited number of short lectures upon such topics as are to be found in this manual.

It will be found that those who have already led Circles will be chiefly interested in finding the solution to the difficulties which they have experienced, e.g., how to prevent the discussion falling flat, how to introduce prayer, &c. This interest should be ministered to, and the more abstruse theory should be led up to only as it is necessary to explain these practical points.

In lecturing it is well to prepare the members by means of questions. Thus, in preparation of a lecture on interest they might be asked : 'To what do you chiefly trace your interest in Missions ?'

Time should also be allowed for them to ask questions,

and questions should be asked of them. Theory cannot be imparted quickly; it can only keep pace with practice.

Spiritual Tone.

In training others as leaders there is a great danger of getting so fascinated with the intellectual side, as to forget the deep importance of spiritual training. For this purpose the normal leader should set up discussions upon such matters as prayer, the place of the Bible, &c. He may either discuss these at length, or he may let the discussion proceed a certain distance, and then promise a short address upon it later.

His whole manner also should emphasize the importance of the spiritual side. This training of leaders is the very heart of our work. Here God the Holy Spirit can use the sanctified worker to the utmost. The power and need of the Holy Spirit should form the subject either of an informal talk round the table, or of an address.

Something should also be said on the spiritual possibilities of the Missionary Study Movement.

Time-table for Training Circle.

The following time-table of a Training Circle is intended to show how the previous suggestions can be brought together, and to give an idea of proportion, but probably it could never be adhered to as it stands.

It is assumed that there are six meetings of one hour and a half each; ten members, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, and the leader X; and that four Chapters of a text-book are being used.

First Meeting.

	Mins.
Address by X on 'What is a Study Circle?' . .	10
Preliminary discussion of difficulties . . .	20
Divide members into three groups, viz., Group I—A, B, C; Group II—D, E, F; Group III—G, H, I, J. Explain future plans, asking Group I to come prepared next time with a programme for Chapter II, &c.	20
Assign Chapter I for next meeting	15
Prayer	10
Address on Possibilities of Missionary Study . .	15

Second Meeting.

	Mins.
X leads Circle on Chapter I, including Prayer	60
Group I assigns Chapter II for next meeting	10
Lecture on 'Aim and Assignments'	20

Third Meeting.

Group I lead remainder on Chapter II	50
Group II assign Chapter III	10
Prayer	10
Criticism of leading	20

Fourth Meeting.

Group II lead remainder on Chapter III	50
Group III assign Chapter IV	10
Prayer	10
Criticism of leading	20

Fifth Meeting.

Group III lead Chapter IV	50
Criticism	20
Prayer	5
Address on 'Spiritual Aspects of Missionary Study'	15

Sixth Meeting.

Discussion upon the new Circles actually contemplated :	
(*a*) Difficulties in forming them	20
(*b*) Results to be expected from them	20
Outstanding questions of leadership	20
Prayer and closing devotional address	30

Such a programme is on the assumption of a weekly or fortnightly meeting, which leaves time for preparation in between. Meantime, the leader can induce the members to be studying this manual, or other papers upon Missionary Study.

Natural Qualities of a Good Leader.

Though the spiritual qualifications of the leader are the most important factor, yet it seems natural to consider first those gifts of nature which are inalienable.

(*a*) *Sympathy*. In view of the need for the leader to study the members, this must be put down as the most essential of all qualifications.

(*b*) *Determination*. Art is long, and a persevering person who intends to lead well is sure to attain considerable success. These two gifts are amply sufficient in themselves.

(*c*) *Self-control*. The leader must be able to hold his own tongue before he can expect to draw out others.

(*d*) *Clearness*. This is an essential attribute of good chairmanship, and though some leaders do excellent work without it, it must rank high.

Other gifts which are desirable are tact, originality, brightness, inspiration, sincerity and all the gifts that give a man influence over his fellows.

Spiritual Qualifications.

Primary amongst these must be put an intense desire for the evangelization of the world. The man who has this burning purpose will qualify himself in other ways to attain his end.

It is of the first importance that the leader should be right with God: not only converted, but growing in grace. This right *attitude* is much more important than length or depth of experience. Some of the keenest and best leaders are those who have only recently been converted, or have just decided to offer for the mission-field.

Spiritual qualifications, unlike natural ones, are within the grasp of all. After all, they are God's gift—to be had for the asking. The Holy Spirit, through whose power alone true success can be attained, is simply waiting to enter in His fullness into the heart of the believer. Here and now He can equip the reader for whatever service lies before him.

Local Conferences for Training Leaders.

In many places Circles have first been started by a conference specially organized by local friends for the purpose, and conducted by a deputation from outside.

In such cases it is usual for three or four parishes to join, and to select some twelve of the most likely names of possible leaders from each parish. Some fifty invitations are thus

issued with a view to getting an attendance of about twenty. The invitation is best made for two sessions of about two hours each, on successive afternoons, with an interval for tea.

The leader of such a Conference should get four or five of the members at least to prepare beforehand specified Assignments with a view to holding a model Circle, and it is well to ask all to make this preparation. The following time-table has been employed for this purpose :—

TUESDAY.	3.30–4.0	Address on the Missionary Study Movement.
	4.0 –4.30	Tea.
	4.30–5.30	Conduct the whole meeting as a Circle on Chapter I.
	5.30–6.0	Questions.
WEDNESDAY.	3.30–4.30	Conduct the whole meeting as a Circle on Chapter II.
	4.30–5.0	Tea.
	5.0 –6.0	Discussion of plans for Circles to be formed.

If the deputation can induce local friends to lead the Circle on the second day, so much the better.

Such a programme allows of the deputation travelling on the first morning and returning on the evening of the second day. The first evening may be given up to a Demonstration Circle before a larger audience, and the following morning to interviews.

Demonstration Circles.

Nothing attracts members to Study Circles like a well-conducted demonstration. The meeting should be well advertised, and a small committee formed to work up an attendance of people whom it is desired to interest.

Six or eight people are required for the model Circle. If possible they should be secured locally, if not they may be brought in from outside. They should have fairly good voices, and be well heard without having to shout. The room should be arranged so that the Circle sit round a table and the audience in an informal arrangement round them in

concentric rings. The model Circle should *not* be on a platform, and all arrangements should be as informal as possible.

The meeting may be opened by the local Vicar, but should then be left in the hands of the leader. He may well begin by some striking testimonies to the interest and value of Missionary Study. He is happy if he can supplement this by the testimony of some actually present in the room. He must explain that this Circle is only 'model' in the sense of being a concrete illustration, but that it lacks the model conditions of privacy, informality, &c., which render the actual Circle so much more interesting and easy to conduct. He should sketch the subject matter of the chapter studied, and for the sake of the audience, outline his plan. About thirty or forty minutes is long enough for the actual Circle, the programme for which should be cut down accordingly.

At the close of the Circle the audience must be drawn into conference upon the difficulties in the way of starting or conducting Circles. It is well to have one or two people prepared to open this. Then such questions may be asked as: 'What seems to you the greatest difficulty in leading a Circle'? 'Would it be harder to find leader or members?' &c. Opportunity should be provided, by slips handed round or otherwise, for names to be taken of those willing to join Circles.

Conduct of a Demonstration Circle.

The object of an ordinary Circle is only to interest those who compose it. The chief object of the Demonstration is to interest those who listen. Vividness and life are therefore primary considerations; and in view of this many things are desirable which would be bad leading in an ordinary Circle.

1. The leader should avoid long pauses, and must be ready with a reserve of material.

2. He need not pay too much attention to shy members. He may draw chiefly from the most interesting.

3. He should have a blackboard, and use it constantly so as to keep the audience in touch.

4. For the same purpose he may repeat remarks that have not been heard.

5. He must throw himself heart and soul into the *Aim* and

constantly reiterate it. He must inspire the members with his own enthusiasm for it.

6. He may lead the discussion less along the lines of the chapter and more on the lines of topics of general interest.

7. From time to time he may put a vote to the audience, or ask a question from them. He must arouse their interest at all costs.

8. He may speak more himself than in an ordinary Circle, but never more than he can help.

Missionary Study Committees.

In places where the Study Movement has taken strong hold, a great impetus can be given by organizing a central committee for the supervision and extension of the work as a whole. Such a committee should keep a register of the Circles in the district, and initiate efforts for training leaders and for spreading the movement. The Secretary should be in close touch with the officials at headquarters.

Multiplication of Life.

The questions that have been considered in this chapter involve the very highest forms of Christian work, because they enable the Christian to multiply his life. The worker who spends his whole time in collecting funds or arranging meetings, or performing tasks of detail—all of them very necessary and therefore noble in themselves—yet works upon a lower plane of usefulness than the one whose life is spent, like that of the Master, in training others and so multiplying his own life. The two sides of activity are not incompatible.

What higher ambition can possess the Christian worker who would fain be in the mission-field, but is hindered by health or some other cause, than to train, inspire and urge out into that field twelve other lives instead of the one he might have given? If undertaken in the right spirit, and transfused throughout by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit, the propagation of this Missionary Study Movement is no mere piece of organization, but the highest type of missionary service.

CHAPTER XII

CONDITIONS OF THE ADULT STUDY CIRCLE

Introductory.

If the reader has followed the line of thought in this manual thus far, he will realize that if the world is to be evangelized in this generation there is need of a great army of missionary educators to arouse and to train the home Church. These men must not only be full of the Holy Ghost, but of all the wisdom which the best educational research can supply.

Now one cause of the Missionary Study Movement is the great advance in the science and art of teaching, which in God's providence has taken place during the past century. Every Study Circle leader should read at least one book upon teaching (see Appendix) not only for the direct help it will give him, but for the stimulus it will afford to further thinking.

Educational Literature.

The books which deal with educational principles may be roughly classified as books on psychology and books on education. The former deal with the laws which condition the human mind in all its processes of sensation, perception, thought, will, feeling, desire, &c.

The books on education vary from those which are chiefly devoted to the science of teaching in its broadest sense—namely, the interaction of one mind upon another—to those which deal with the most technical affairs of the schoolroom from the best methods of teaching vulgar fractions to the proper size and shape of a school desk.

The most useful books for the Study Circle leader are those like James's *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*, or Adams's *Exposition and Illustration in Teaching*, which deal with the underlying principles of all teaching and learning, and yet deal with them in an easy and popular style.

Broad general principles, such as those which are touched upon in Chapters III and IV, are applicable to all forms of study.

But, as the more technical side of school teaching is approached, the student finds himself compelled to discriminate between these general principles and their particular applications. The latter may well cover the whole range of school teaching, and yet not be applicable to adult study because of a difference in the conditions: just as certain botanical rules may be true of all British flowering plants, but not equally applicable to all plant life. In order to make this discrimination it is essential to get a clear understanding of the difference of the conditions between school-teaching and adult missionary study.

The Study Circle and the School.

The first difference which strikes us is that the learners are adults, and not children. How deep a gulf lies between the child mind and the adult mind has only recently been clearly realized.

Secondly, there is a great difference in the external conditions of the time given, and the general place which the study occupies in the life.

Thirdly, there is a real difference between the subjects studied.

The student of educational literature, therefore, must use care before adopting ready-made rules of school-teaching. He must inquire whether they are independent of the factors which distinguish the Study Circle from the school; and if not, he must modify them accordingly. We now proceed to the detailed study of these factors.

The Adult Mind.

There are many proverbs to the effect that men are but children of a larger growth. If by this is meant that some of

the characteristics of childhood persist in adult life, it is true enough; but if it implies that the difference is merely one of size, it is fundamentally false. A man is no more a magnified child than an oak is a magnified acorn.

The ultimate distinction between the child and the adult is contained in the word *maturity*, implying as it does the change from a simple embryonic condition in which special powers and characteristics are latent, into a condition in which the full powers and characteristics are developed and matured. There is still scope for growth and expansion after maturity is reached, but there is then no further essential change in the character and functions of the organism.

Childhood and adolescence is therefore essentially the period of the unfolding and development of the powers and characteristics which are mature in the adult. These include all the powers: whether characteristic of the race, or of the particular country or class, or of the individual. In the life of an average Englishman, for example, his schooldays witness the development not only of those mental characteristics which he shares with the adult savage, but of those which are the common heritage of civilization, of those peculiar to his own social class, and finally of those individual characteristics which are possessed by himself alone.

Maturity, therefore, implies not only the ripening of powers common to all adults, but the gradual differentiation of characteristics specific to particular classes and individuals.

Again, this process is not merely one of development from within. It is limited and constantly conditioned by external environment. The adult is not only the result of development, but of the circumstances which, with his inner life, have made up the totality of his experience.

Maturity of Powers.

Childhood, therefore, is the period when the innate powers of memory, imagination, reasoning, &c., successively emerge and sustain their most rapid growth; and this is therefore essentially the period when they can be best cultivated and developed. In adult life they have attained their full growth, and have been in exercise for a shorter or longer period of years.

Take as an example the reasoning powers. The school rightly aims at teaching the child to think and generalize logically and correctly, and upon this infinite pains should be bestowed. But those who have to deal with the adult have before them the finished product of this process—be it success or failure. The reasoning powers of some adults are like well-grown trees—full, strong, and logical; of others they are like stunted trees—distorted, weak, and dwarfed. But in both cases they are like trees and not like saplings—the period of development is passed.

It is true that, with great pains and patience and time, considerable improvement can be effected even in the reasoning powers of the adult; but in the main the educator will have to take them more or less as he finds them and apply his efforts another way.

Likewise regarding powers of memory, of sympathy, of imagination, of observation, &c., the cultivation of which are so important in the school. Some advance may still be made, and latent powers may be discovered and exercised, but speaking generally they must be taken as they are and reckoned with as amongst the limitations and conditions under which the process of education is to be carried on. Any improvement in these powers will be reckoned as a by-product and not as the central aim of adult education.

The Heritage of Civilization.

Childhood is also the period for the acquisition of the general stock of experience which is the heritage of civilized countries. The child is taught at school systematically to spell, read, write, and count, and also that general knowledge about the world and Christ and God, which is the common property of the adults of his race. How much this will include will vary according to his social standing and the length of his school life.

The adult educator again has to take all this as his starting-point. He may find a well-educated or ill-educated set of learners, or often enough those of a good social but poor intellectual education, often prejudiced and narrow in their general conception of life. Here there is, perhaps, more hope of improvement than in such a fundamental concern as the

reasoning powers, and a Study Circle may really do substantial service in helping forward general education (and even in special cases of helping to read and write correctly). But this must be regarded still as a by-product and not as its purpose. In the main, childhood is the time when reading and writing and general knowledge must be taught, and the educator of the adult has again to deal only with the finished product. That which is the aim of the school meets him now as an external condition of his work.

Individual Experience.

The adult differs from the child not only in matured powers and in possessing acquired arts and conventions of civilization, but also in having a length of individual experience behind him. The process of differentiation has been going on for years and deepening its effect every day. The development of his own inherited and individual tendencies has been accompanied by the impress of his own peculiar circumstances. His school, his home, his choice of a profession, the various places where he has lived, the books he has read, the conversations he has had, have all gone to make up his character.

New ideas, therefore, cannot be written upon the mind of an adult as upon a clean slate, which is somewhat the condition of the mind of the child. A schoolboy, for example, may come to the study of political economy with an open mind ; but not so the convinced political tariff-reformer or free-trader. Likewise in matters of religion and other topics, ideas do not come to him for the first time, but they find a host of related experiences in the past which rise up to meet them, and according to which they are judged. The word 'missionary' may need explanation to the child ; but with most adults there is already an established attitude called up by it, be it one of sympathy, indifference or opposition. The adult, moreover, has formed his habits, which have to be reckoned with as part of himself. He can only read at certain hours in the day, and then only in a certain fashion, and so on. Altogether he is very largely what his experience has made him.

Aims of Child and Adult Education contrasted.

These contrasts between the adult and the child mind enable us now to present a general contrast between the aims of child education and adult education. Childhood is the period of development, and the school must aim at moulding and training and developing the innate powers as they expand, and imparting the best ideals, knowledge, and skill that civilization can supply. It aims at imparting lofty ideals of a general and fundamental character and of training innate powers irrespective of the particular use to which they shall be put.

The adult educator finds himself faced with the finished product of the school, and also it may be of years of business life. He may carry forward or supplement the work of the school, but only to a small degree. What, then, is his work?

A great part of education remains—namely, the direction of these mature powers to practical ends, and their final adaptation to their ultimate use. Although this is less fundamental and general, it is a longer process, and by no means less important.

All education consists in adapting the individual to his environment, but it may be said that in childhood it occupies itself more with the innate powers, and as life proceeds it works outwards, and is more and more closely connected with the practical needs of life. At first purely general powers are trained, such as reasoning, irrespective of their ultimate use. Then chemistry is learned; then, in college and hospital, medical science, and finally in practice the more detailed and practical skill is acquired which go to make the good doctor.

There is no hard and fast line; and the process of learning is never completed. But at first it is general, and afterwards more specific; at first it is universal, and afterwards more detailed; at first it is simple and fundamental, and afterwards it grows more complex and more closely applied to experience.

External Conditions of the Study Circle.

The Study Circle leader not only has to deal with adults instead of children, but he works under conditions which put

him at a great disadvantage compared with other adult educators, such as college lecturers.

1. The question of time is a fundamental limitation. Five of the best years of a man's life are given to qualify him to be a doctor; would it be too much to ask for a tenth part of this (say, six months) to qualify him to be a worker in the Kingdom of God? Study Circle leaders should remember this disproportion if they are discouraged at the small results obtained from eight sessions of an hour each, and the corresponding preparation. Who would think of teaching Astronomy in eight lessons? Yet the dealings of God with men are harder to understand, as they are infinitely more important, than the ordering of the stars.

2. There is the interference of other interests. At a Summer School or special conference the value of having the one subject uppermost is quickly perceived.

3. There is no selfish advantage to be gained from the study. The Study Circle leader is a propagandist, who has to seek and persuade his pupils as well as to direct their studies. He is like the popular lecturer who has first to attract his audience and then to hold them. The necessity of making the Circle directly interesting and attractive is always prominently before him, for he has no claim upon his students' attendance.

Missions Contrasted with Secular Subjects.

The nature of the subject studied creates a great difference between school and missionary education.

1. Missions are only beginning to be studied systematically, and the field is therefore unexplored. This has a good side, for there are no evil traditions to be lived down, and every student has the great stimulus of being able to proceed at once to original investigation. But, on the other hand, there are no well marked tracks upon which to proceed; and the material has not yet been sifted, selected, and the best parts rendered accessible.

2. Missionary work differs entirely from such a subject as Mathematics in the scope it offers for difference of opinion. It is perhaps more allied to History or Political Economy in this respect. But even compared with such subjects a real difference of conditions is here introduced. In school subjects

the greatest common measure of standard opinion is taken, so to speak, and only such things are taught as are generally agreed upon, and these are taught with authority. Whereas in the Study Circle the conclusions formed will depend upon the personal outlook of each member, and no such standard is attainable.

It may be that as the science of Missions develops, certain conclusions will command a sufficient consensus of Christian opinion to render them authoritative, but at present missionary convictions cannot be 'taught' like the rules of grammar.

3. The most characteristic difference of Missionary Study from school study is the moral obligation which attaches to it. A person may study Astronomy for pleasure, and in accepting the conclusions of others he accepts no fresh responsibility. But the missionary subject is fraught at every stage with a challenge to the life. Sin within may make the student rebel against the conclusion to which his reason is guiding him.

In secular education the impulse of self-interest is always behind the student. It helps him to adapt himself to his environment and to make the most of life. But missionary education urges him to swim against the stream, to overcome and change his environment, and to engage in a propaganda against the ideas and fashions of this world.

Its appeal, therefore, lies through the Spirit of God to the human spirit yielded to His influence; and this new spiritual element must always be applied to any rules drawn from secular education before they can be assumed to hold good. This spiritual factor, which is the very foundation of Missionary Study, occupies an entirely subordinate place in books upon secular education.

Adult Missionary Education.

We are now prepared to sum up the difference between the missionary education of the adult and the secular education of the school. They are both education, and therefore any principles which are universal in their scope apply equally to both; but any rules or inferences which involve the special aims or conditions of the school must be carefully tested and adjusted before they can be applied to the Study Circle.

In common with all adult education, the Study Circle has to assume the school education, and upon that basis it aims chiefly at directing the powers of the individual, and giving him, so to speak, a technical training as a home worker for Missions. So far, it is parallel to a hospital course regarded as a medical training. It takes into account the actual case of the home Church—the need of arousing enthusiasm and dispelling ignorance and forming right judgments; and it aims so to train the home worker as to fit him for his part in the missionary campaign. There is, unfortunately, scarcely any literature dealing with the science and art of University education, to which it is more allied than to that of the primary and secondary schools.

Whereas the aim of the schools is to develop general powers irrespective of their application, the aim of the Study Circle is to direct these powers into a certain work and adapt them closely to it.

The extreme shortness of the time at his disposal compels the Circle leader to beware of the leisurely methods possible and necessary in school teaching. Instruction must be made secondary to impression.

Above all, the spiritual nature of Missionary Study is its dominant characteristic. The Study Circle has the nature of a mission as well as that of a school. It is educative, but it also implies a strong appeal to the spiritual nature and the will. It aims not only at giving intelligent understanding and high ideals, but at producing a definite consecration of the life.

Plato once said that his object was not to give knowledge to his pupils, or to illuminate some corner of their minds, but 'to turn the whole soul towards the light.' So the leader must aim to bring the whole personality, with all its adult powers, face to face with God, in order that His light may illuminate and inspire the whole life.

We shall now pass to consider in detail some of the most characteristic differences between the child and the adult mind.

Personality.

The adult possesses a developed personality, accounted for by the expansion of his own personal peculiarities and

the effect of his individual experience. Children are by nature imitative and want to be like others around them; but the adult has reached a certain type of character, and he wants to be 'himself.'

The expression of his face has attained a certain 'likeness,' his handwriting is recognizable as his and no one else's, around his name there has gathered a whole network of associations, and all these and much else go to make up his personality. He has established opinions upon many matters which he has come to regard as a part of 'himself.' He is a Churchman or a Nonconformist, a Liberal or a Conservative, and so on. He scarcely regards himself as open to change on these matters. He is open to receive new facts from others, but his opinions are so identified with the self, that he cannot receive them ready made. On many matters 'his mind is made up,' and even on new questions he is much more cautious and independent than the child.

The personality or self of the adult is made up of a number of systems, or smaller 'selves,' which control divers departments of his life. The same man may have a golfing self, and a professional self, and a church-going self, and a wife-and-family self, and a pride-of-ancestry self—all of which represent different attitudes of mind, which he puts on and off like his different clothes, and which are elements in his personalty. Each one of these selves is a basis of appeal for the educator who knows his subject.

Self-consciousness.

This developed personality leads to a stronger *self*-consciousness in adults than in children, and a correspondingly strong desire to be themselves, and to express themselves. They do not wish to be other people. This is not the same as self-assertion; for silent thought may be the mode of self-expression of a retiring nature. But whatever allows the individual to 'feel himself,' and particularly to realize his old self as expanding and exercising itself in new and congenial directions, will be gratifying.

Our Lord showed the greatest respect for personality, and His treatment of the Twelve is a never-failing lesson in the development of individuality. He found twelve men of

no social or political standing, whom the world would have counted nothing worth. But He showed deep respect for the individuality of each, until He taught them something of the infinite value of the individual soul. He never dealt with Simon as with John, but He trained each character along the lines of its own natural development, making out of Simon a rock, and out of John the Apostle of love. As they felt His influence, they realized 'themselves'—namely, all that God had given them the power to become—and so each attained a marvellous strength of personality.

May God grant each leader so to see the possibilities in all the members in his Circle, and develop them accordingly.

Practicality.

The powers of imagination develop early, and children revel in fairy tales and stories of the marvellous. They thoroughly enjoy a make-believe situation created out of their own fancy, and untrammelled by the limitations of external reality. But as we grow older the hard facts of life lay their chilling hand upon us, and, by compelling us to conform to their laws, induce in us a different feeling. We lose our liking for the fanciful and ideal, and get more and more respect for the actual and the practical. Youth looks forward and speculates; manhood looks backward and relies upon experience. The question grows more habitual: 'What is the use?'

Adults, therefore, will take less interest than young people in imaginary situations, impersonations, &c., unless they happen to be in a play humour; whereas anything with a practical outcome will appeal to them more. Prayer, for those who believe in it, will fall under the latter head, and men especially can be gathered for prayer more easily than is often thought.

Independence.

The child is essentially dependent upon others, and naturally looks for guidance both in thought and action. But during adolescence new powers of judgment and choice tell the growing lad that the time has come to think and act for himself.

He begins to resent control and assert his independence, and society recognizes his right to a responsible place and position in the world.

So far is true of every adult. But in the case of men occupying positions of leadership, or of women who are mistresses in their own home, this spirit of independence is greatly intensified. They are used to issuing orders and to being obeyed, and the more they are so the more unnatural and uncongenial they find it to submit to discipline or control. One reason why some business men feel out of place in church is due to the contrast between their treatment there and in their offices.

One kind of control will be welcomed: namely, such as a chairman exercises in a business meeting—administering rules of debate which are agreed upon and evidently for the common good.

The leader will recognize this independence and respect it. He will avoid anything savouring of the Sunday school, realizing that adults are not children and do not want to be treated as such. He will expect and tolerate a certain amount of self-assertion and dogmatism from those who are accustomed to rule. He will uphold their prestige, and try to prevent them from displaying their own ignorance, or making themselves appear foolish.

If he does this, he will find their independence a great asset. Those who value their own prestige will prepare thoroughly, and will be most likely to act as leaders afterwards. Independent characters need careful handling, but once won they are of great value.

Inflexibility.

The child is flexible and adaptible with all the adjustability of the immature, growing organism. But gradually the growing plant gets less pliable, more rigid, and harder to bend; until at last it seems impossible to move it without breaking it altogether. The mere fact that the great majority of conversions take place in adolescence or youth shows that this law has a place in the spiritual sphere. But both in intellectual and spiritual matters it is easy to exaggerate the inflexibility of the adult, and to settle down to an easy

pessimism. Again, we may remember the enormous change in each of the Twelve Apostles during three years' training.

One thing that renders the adult flexible is constant exercise. Here is an English waiter who left school at fifteen and has now been serving ten years in a country hotel. He could not learn Spanish if he tried. But here is another who left at the same time, and has since spent some years in France and some in Germany. He will learn Spanish now with ease, and more quickly than he could ten years before! The mental powers of those who exercise them reach their climax much later than their physical powers; and in the learned professions a man is often at his prime at fifty years of age. It is a matter of experience that some of the best Study Circle leaders have commenced learning when over forty.

Another factor in the plasticity of the adult is the kind of adaptation he is required to make. The more fundamental changes—such as improvement in the reasoning powers, or actual conversion—get rapidly more difficult. But when it is a question of exercising some acquired power in a new direction, the change is easy. A trained debater can easily become a missionary speaker, or a day-school teacher can easily become a Study Circle leader.

Above all, in spiritual matters, we must be careful to remember that God's grace is sufficient to enable any man to live according to His will.

Difference of Age.

Books upon teaching divide pupils into five grades—viz., kindergarten, primary, intermediate, high school or adolescent, and college or adult. If education terminated at the age of twenty-one this classification might suffice, but it does not, and the grading of adults is almost as important as tha of children.

Shakespeare gives one of his seven ages of man to the infant, one to the schoolboy, and five to adult life. He distinguishes the lover, sighing and sentimental; the soldier, quick, forceful, and sacrificing all for fame; the justice, sleek and full of wise saws; the pantaloon, relapsing into the childish treble; and infirm and vacuous old age. For our

purpose the last two of these may be omitted, but the former three represent well-defined stages which we may well consider.

1. The period of *youth*, or the first few years after leaving school (say, from seventeen to twenty-five), corresponds to Shakespeare's lover, and to the college period of the books. The emotional nature is then at its strongest. The power of widest generalization has been reached, and universal ideals have superseded personal and social ones. Great moral truths, noble ambitions, and difficult tasks now make their strongest appeal. It is the period when most missionary decisions are made, and, what is vastly important, those made at this age are seldom reversed.

It is the age when the young man receives his business or professional training, and the girl learns her new social duties. The competition of these things for the interest of the individual is severe, but those who believe that the Kingdom of God should be put *first*, will urge the claim of the Study Circle as more important even than social or intellectual self-improvement. At this age a bold claim that God should be put first is the surest way to success.

2. The period of *early manhood* (say, from twenty-five to thirty-five) corresponds to Shakespeare's soldier, and must not be confounded with the preceding. The physical and mental powers are now at their height. Not unfrequently there is a 'steadying down' after the emotional unsettlement of the previous period, and men are often more religiously disposed than at any other time of life. Men are still plastic and receptive. In business they represent 'the younger generation,' and stand for new ideas and progress as against the stolid conservatism of their elders. It is a most hopeful opportunity for Missionary Study to induce a new outlook upon life, if not a change of career. By this time the profession is settled (not always irrevocably) and some professional skill has been acquired. In many cases a new start in life is now made by marriage, by a new appointment, or some other definite stage in their career. It is the best of all opportunities for engaging those who are Christians, but not yet workers, in some definite Christian service. If a strong case can be made out, the whole virile energies of manhood may now

be claimed; and the need for the evangelization of the world presents just such a case.

3. The period of *later manhood* (say, from thirty-five to forty-five) corresponds to Shakespeare's justice, and is again distinct in its characteristics. The powers of acquisition are now beginning to decline, habit is getting strong, and elasticity of mind is gradually decreasing. The attitude towards religion generally is now fixed by habit, and only to be changed by a convulsion. But men are still open to new modifications in harmony with existing systems. There is still plenty of scope for training Christian workers as missionary advocates.

One danger of this period is for Christian workers to retain too long some sphere of usefulness which should be passed on to a younger worker whilst they press on to something more responsible. Such a system of promotion should be constantly in progress.

Other Differences.

In most Circles the members are of the same sex, and the two sexes require different treatment. As a rule the sexes work more freely and better apart.

Men are more independent and impatient of control, less ready to accept conventional standards, more vigorous and combative in debate, and more able to deal with questions of broad, general principle. Women are more conscientious and painstaking in preparation, and possess a greater capacity for detail. They respond more quickly to leadership, and enjoy co-operative work. The religious side is more easily brought forward, but is perhaps not so deep.

There is no need to do more than mention social differences. Difference of education is far less important than difference of ability. Thoughtful and reading people are now found in all classes, and such may resent as too easy work which some with greater school advantages would find beyond them.

Importance of Grading.

These differences of age, sex, position, and ability have been accentuated because they all call for certain differences of treatment. The reader will be able to amplify the brief

descriptions here given, and with the aid of previous chapters make the application.

The importance of grading Study Circles cannot be overemphasized. In proportion as the members approximate in age and type, and as the Circle is adapted to that type, so it will prove attractive to others of the same kind. This is especially so in the matter of age.

Many unions have been formed by a group of young men, and a fresh supply of young blood has been kept up for some years. Then they find it harder to get young members to join, and they wonder why! The reason is because they are getting old, and do not realize it. The writer has heard a man of twenty-four described as 'awfully old' by a youth of nineteen. At that age five years seems so short to look back on, but so long to those who are looking forward.

Let there be a Study Circle of men between twenty-five and thirty-five, and let them ask six young men of nineteen to join it. They may all refuse, and yet these six may take the greatest delight in running a 'show of their own.' Once the real differences characterizing these divers ages and classes are realized, it will be seen that with such diverse tendencies and outlooks there is comparatively little chance of success unless each is catered for separately, and that grading is really a necessity. The Study Circle, with its small membership and temporary nature, makes possible what is so desirable; and avoids that dragged-out existence which has proved fatal to innumerable unions which have outlived their youth and usefulness.

CHAPTER XIII

TEACHING AND LEADING

Is Leading the same as Teaching?

The continual comparison and contrast between the Study Circle and the school suggests the question whether, after all, leading is identical with teaching.

The preceding chapter has shown how very different in many ways must be the rules for teaching adults in missionary questions to those for teaching children in secular subjects. But the question still remains open whether the relationship of the Study Circle leader to his members can in *any* sense be called that of a teacher, and if so, in what sense? The inquiry which this suggests is so fascinating in itself, and leads so directly to the heart of our subject, that it seems worth while to devote the closing chapter to its investigation.

What is Teaching?

We commence by an analysis of our notion of teaching. Teaching is generally used in a narrower sense than education. The latter word is used to include all that systematically develops the knowledge and character of the child, including discipline and social and personal influences. The word 'teaching' is more closely related to the subject taught, and is generally restricted to the act of imparting skill in some art or understanding in some branch of knowledge. The correlative term to teaching is learning, and what the pupil learns is what the teacher teaches. The teacher is, in fact, the cause and instrument whereby the pupil is caused and enabled to learn.

The act of teaching, therefore, involves an element of control, inasmuch as the teacher causes the pupil to learn certain things. It also involves an element of assistance, inasmuch as the pupil cannot learn effectively apart from the teacher; if he could do so, we should not call it teaching.

The Work of the Teacher.

Professor Welton,* whose analysis is here closely followed, defines as the three factors in teaching (1) the child to be taught, (2) the subject-matter by which he is to be taught, and (3) the teacher who teaches him; and he describes the teacher as the 'intermediary' between the subject and the child.

He divides the teacher's preparation into three stages. Firstly, he selects the subject matter to be taught ('what relations he wishes to set before his pupils'). Secondly, he thinks out the manner in which the pupil can best learn this subject-matter ('what forms of mental activity those pupils must experience in order to master those relations'). Thirdly, he studies how they may be incited to learn.

In this programme we observe how great a burden is thrown upon the teacher. It is true that the pupil can only learn by his own mental activity; but, whatever the pupil does by way of thinking, the teacher must do before him, and more also. The teacher is assumed to have a masterly acquaintance with the whole subject, and also with the workings of his pupil's mind.

The teacher's work, therefore, is like that of the Swiss guide. It is presumed that he has long since explored and climbed the mountains himself, and that he knows something also of his patron's powers. In any actual climb, he firstly selects the peak to be climbed and the conditions; he secondly thinks out the best route according to his patron's powers, facing each difficulty and the way to surmount it in thought beforehand; and thirdly he incites his patron by suitable inducements to undertake it. The climber, indeed, ascends only by his own climbing; but whatever he does the guide has already done, and more. There is the same element of control, or causation, in that it is here assumed that the guide selects

* *Principles and Methods of Teaching*, chaps. ii. and iii.

both peak and route and incites his patron to undertake it; and there is the same element of assistance both in planning and execution.

The Work of the Leader.

Following out the climbing analogy of the last paragraph, we may describe the work of the leader as more nearly analogous to that of the amateur leader of a party of climbers. In his case there is less of control and less of assistance, both because he is less able to give them and because of the different relationship existing between them. The leader's previous knowledge is limited to a mere survey of the peak to be climbed (the chapter studied), such directions as he has gathered from a guide-book (the *Suggestions to Leaders*), and his own ideas. His skill in leading is more general in character than specially related to the region to be explored. In selecting the route he consults his party more, and exercises less authority over them. In rendering assistance he may get almost as much help from them as they do from him. The whole relationship is, in fact, much more of a mutual one. All are nearly, if not quite, in the same position and on the same level. If one is selected to lead, it is not as a professional but as an amateur amongst amateurs, as a *primus inter pares*.

Putting this into general terms we may define the difference between leading and teaching as follows: The position of the teacher is one of acknowledged professional skill and personal authority, in virtue of which he is expected both to control and assist the pupil in the process of learning. Whereas in leading, the leader possesses this skill and authority (in general) in a markedly less degree, whereby he is able to exercise less control, and give less assistance. Both teacher and leader give incitement to learn, and help and direction in learning; but there is that difference in degree which exists between the professional, engaged for a certain purpose, and an amateur selected from a group of equals.

Assistance given by the Leader.

The assistance given by the teacher consists in planning the course and helping the pupils to learn. He is expected to know the best curriculum and how to teach it. Such

complete knowledge cannot be expected from the Circle leader. But it is clearly the leader's duty as much as the teacher's to render all the assistance he can, both in planning the course and in helping to form right conclusions and receive right impressions.

Provided he exercise his knowledge rightly, the leader cannot know too much of the subject or of the laws of teaching. Above all, he must strive to know much about the Lord, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, that he may give help in spiritual things. The members of the Circle will soon find out whether the leader is able to help them or not, without his forcing his help upon them.

But in giving assistance, the leader must always remember that paradox of teaching: that he who helps most is often he who helps least. His help must be only such as to encourage them to put forth their own efforts. He must not forsake his position of being only a leader, one step in advance of his company, and must always demand from them their full share of co-operation. As he increases in knowledge and ability, he must expect them to progress simultaneously, and thus as all advance together, they will be constantly able to undertake larger and larger tasks.

Control Exercised by the Leader.

A good teacher exercises immense control over his pupils. He directs their whole course of studies and maps out their time for them. Not only so, but by directing their thoughts in detail, he sets out to 'teach' them certain things—that is, to conform their minds to a plan of his own upon certain subjects. Owing to their respect for his authority, the pupils likewise set out to have their ideas so regulated, and in the subject-matter of the teaching consciously adapt themselves to his conclusions.

The control of the leader is altogether less, and is only exercised by consent. His is not (as a rule) a position of authority, though it is one of influence. In planning the course he has a free hand, but in directing their preparation he has to rely more upon persuasion and reason. He cannot, for instance, like a schoolmaster, command them to read two chapters instead of one, but must consult their likings. In

regard to the conclusions reached, also, there is neither on his part that mastery of the subject, nor in the subject that scientific uniformity and absoluteness, which might allow him the absolute control of a good teacher. The whole process must be more tentative and more mutual. Leader and members must set forth on a voyage of discovery together, rather than the leader set out to guide them to a fixed destination.

Even in the case of a truth which the leader regards as demonstrable, there is lacking that respect of authority which is given by a pupil to his teacher, and any usurpation of control upon his part will only lead to contra-suggestion, and force them into opposition.

Some Detailed Applications.

It may help to elucidate the subject to apply the foregoing distinctions in detail to the three types of learning which aim at (1) width, (2) depth, (3) application of knowledge.

1. In teaching facts to children, the teacher imparts verbally what he has before acquired. In college-teaching, the professor generally uses a text-book, or directs his pupils to sources of knowledge. He seldom expects them to acquire knowledge which he does not possess himself. But in the Study Circle, the leader must often direct his members to inquiries which he has not pursued before, to search in books of which he only knows the names, and so on. This is certainly causing to learn, but it lacks the full assistance given in teaching, properly so-called.

2. In lessons aiming at depth of understanding, the teacher tries to give his pupils his own clear view of the subject. It is generally a case where only one view is possible to a well-instructed mind, which only needs elucidation to be accepted. But in Circle work, as we have seen, there are few propositions of this demonstrable character. The leader often aims, indeed, at getting clearer views of a subject ; but he will frequently bring to the Circle only a clear statement of the problem to be solved, and look to the members for mutual help in solving it. His business partakes as much of that of the chairman as of the teacher. The former does not set out to prove a proposition or elucidate a difficulty;

he aims at clearness, but it is a clear statement of business to be investigated and decided upon; he keeps discussion to the point, assists in reaching conclusions, and registers conclusions reached, even if contrary to his own judgment.

3. In imparting skill, such as drawing, or in solving problems, the teacher imparts by example and precept his own skill to his pupil. Here there is little difference between the position of the leader and the teacher. It is only possible really to train others when the leader possesses more proficiency than those he professes to train. Yet even here there is more of mutual help, and less of instruction given from one to the remainder. A leader may learn to pray extempore at the same time as his Circle. Perhaps it is in such matters, and in cases where the leader is really in advance of the rest, that it is most dangerous to adopt a tone of authority. Humility in the leader is, then, more necessary than ever.

The Relative Position of the Leader.

The position of the leader relative to the Circle, therefore, is more one of equality and less one of authority than that of the teacher. In different Circles it may approximate more to the one side or the other. In a Circle of undergraduates, who decide to form a circle and then elect a leader for the mere sake of having a leader, it is obviously a case of near equality. But several factors may come in to bring the leader's position nearly on a level with that of the teacher.

The leader, though in a similar position to the rest, may be marked out by greater knowledge or experience, and this to any degree. One who has led several Study Circles —perhaps on the same text-book—has such knowledge and experience, enabling him to give more assistance than where one leads for the first time. The leader again may be marked out by greater missionary zeal, and be the one who has influenced the others to form the Circle. He may, therefore, be a person—whatever his position—who would naturally exert a strong influence over the others. Such a factor will naturally cause a larger element of control to be exerted and expected. The leader may be in a different position from the others—either intellectually, or in age, or socially, or in official position. For instance, a clergyman holding a Study Circle

for a class of young working men (say, former scholars in his Sunday school) would naturally be regarded by them with the respect and authority of a teacher. In such a case we get an extreme instance in which the difference between leading and teaching almost disappears.

It is evident that throughout this chapter we have used the word teacher in its widest sense, and so as to include all those who, from a recognized position, control and assist the learning processes of other minds.

The Leader's Progress.

The Study Circle leader who prays over his work is sometimes discouraged at the immense demands that the work makes upon him. Study of Missions, study of men, study of method. Where is there time or spirit for these things? Is it not better to give it up?

Thank God! this discouragement is only momentary. God knows the time and the natural forces at his disposal. God knows, also, the supernatural forces, too often unregarded, also at his disposal. At the call of God he took up this work, and it is God's doing that has opened up to him this wide vista of its possibilities.

The whole purpose of this manual is not to hold up impossible ideals, but to help ordinary men and women with little time and few talents to make the best use of that time and those talents. It is just because we have but the one talent that we must put it out to the very highest usury in God's service. Let a large proportion of the small amount of time be spent in prayer. Time so spent is never regretted. Let the leader resolve to go forward, even if slowly. Above all let him lay hold of the vast resources of God. 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally.' 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?'

APPENDIX

BOOKS ON EDUCATION FOR FURTHER READING

ADAMS. 'Exposition and Illustration in Teaching.' 5*s.* Macmillan & Co.

An excellent manual of the principles of exposition and illustration. Written in popular form, and applicable to Study Circle work. It explains the nature and the contents and the activities of the human mind ; and shows how exposition depends upon the mental background of the pupil, and suggestion on the part of the teacher. It also deals exhaustively with the different methods of illustration, their conditions and efficiency.

JAMES. 'Talks to Teachers.' 2*s.* 6*d.* net. Longmans.

A series of popular lectures to day-school teachers upon the psychological side of their work. It is of general application and very breezy. It deals with such topics as association of ideas, interest, memory, habit, character-building.

SAILER. 'Mission Study Class Leader.' 1*s.* 6*d.* net. Y.P.M.M., 78, Fleet Street, E.C.

The general scope is much the same as that of the present manual, but there is comparatively little overlapping. It is stimulating and suggestive, both in respect of the general justification of the Study Circle method, and in the details of the leader's work.

THISTLETON MARK. 'The Teacher and the Child.' 1*s.* net. Fisher Unwin.

A book for Sunday-school teachers by a professor of education. It deals with the nature and training of the mind, the meaning and methods of teaching, the training of character. The Sunday school is in view throughout, but much of it is of use to the Circle Leader. The point of view is distinctively Christian.

The above are strongly recommended as a first course of reading.

BAGLEY. 'The Educative Process.' 6*s*. Macmillan & Co.

A manual on the aims and meaning and method of teaching. It discusses the true end of education, and the place of experience, habit, judgment, memory, &c., in education. It also considers the value and character of different types of teaching.

BALDWIN. 'The Mind.' 1*s*. Hodder & Stoughton.

A brief manual of elementary psychology of a popular character. Based upon an evolutionary and biological view of the mind.

HUNTER. 'Familiar Talks on Sunday-school Teaching.' 1*s*. Butcher.

It covers the same ground as *The Teacher and the Child*, but in a way that scarcely overlaps. It deals with the different stages of child-life, different types of children, and the different impulses which can be excited. Exceedingly clear and well arranged.

OTHER BOOKS ARE AS FOLLOWS:—

ADAMS. 'Primer on Teaching.' 6*d*. T. & T. Clark.

For Sunday-school teachers. It covers somewhat the same ground as *The Teacher and the Child*, and is wonderfully full.

FITCH. 'Lectures on Teaching.' 5*s*. Cambridge University Press.

A manual of the aims and methods of the school. It deals with such topics as the aims of the school, learning and remembering, discipline, teaching, arithmetic, &c. Lectures delivered in 1880.

MCMURRY. 'The Method of the Recitation.' The Macmillan Company.

A full treatment of the discussion method of teaching and the technique of the inductive development lesson.

'Report of International Mission Study Conference.' 1*s*. 6*d*. Y.P.M.M. 78, Fleet Street, E.C.

Contains interesting papers, not available elsewhere, upon the aims of missionary study, the training of leaders, preparation of text-books, grading, &c. Also a history of the various national mission-study movements.

STOUT. 'Manual of Psychology.' 7*s*. 6*d*. net. University Tutorial Press.

The best student manual of psychology. A recognized University text-book.

THRING. 'Theory and Practice of Teaching.' 3*s*. 6*d*. Cambridge University Press.

Essays by a great public schoolmaster on his ideals in teaching. Original and suggestive, but unsystematic and unscientific.

WELTON. 'Principles and Methods of Teaching.' 4*s*. 6*d*. University Tutorial Series.

The first hundred pages give an excellent analysis of the aim and function of teaching; the remaining four hundred pages deal with the teaching of special school subjects.

WELTON. 'Psychology of Education.' 7*s*. 6*d*. Macmillan & Co.

A monograph on the psychology of questions underlying education, e.g., bodily and mental endowment, the nature of experience, learning by direct and indirect experience, critical thought, ideals and character. Each subject is treated from a strictly psychological point of view, but the terminology is popular.

INDEX

THE END

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